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First 5: The Governor Unveiled the 2022-23 Budget Proposal which Serves as a Framework to Advance the Health and Well-Being of California's Youngest Children

ALAMEDA, CA (January 12, 2022) - On Monday, Governor Newsom released his proposed 2022-23 budget plan, a framework that features important investments to advance the health and well-being of California's youngest children. The [First 5 Association of California](#), [First 5 California](#) and [First 5 LA](#) welcome the governor's continued focus on making programs, services and resources more equitable, to ensure all children and families have the safe and nurturing environments they need to thrive.

The First 5 Network is committed to advocating for the needs of children and families, especially now as the COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated long-standing inequities in child health and well-being. The governor's budget proposal includes important system changes that utilize the state's historic surpluses to help respond to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screenings, promote access to universal pre-K, and strengthen behavioral health services. The First 5 Network especially thanks Governor Newsom for the holistic emphasis on multi-domains of child development, including cognitive, emotional, and physical well-being.

"We commend Governor Newsom for continuing to invest in California's youngest children in this year's proposed budget," said Kitty Lopez, board president of the First 5 Association of California and executive director of First 5 San Mateo. "The governor's proposal demonstrates a focus on the needs of the whole child and family through investments in home visiting, early literacy, early intervention programs and mitigating child poverty. These are critical investments as we continue to confront the historic barriers our families face including racism, injustice, and poverty."

"We applaud the governor for keeping the needs of parents and children a centerpiece in this year's budget." said Camille Maben, executive director at First 5 California. "We are excited about the investments in early literacy, an issue that the Commission has championed for almost a decade through our Talk Read Sing © campaign. We are also looking forward to continuing our work with the governor and legislature in building robust systems to support full implementation of mixed delivery transitional kindergarten (T-K), child care, home visiting, children's mental health, and other anti-poverty programs".

Ensuring that literacy programs are accessible to our youngest children and providing culturally relevant books and literacy support for dual-language learners and for children who face learning delays or disabilities are vital to the future of children, families and our state. To date, nearly 730,000 books have been distributed, through the First 5 Network, to 111,364 families throughout California, including the highest need populations. Furthermore, the First 5 network has engaged with other organizations such as the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which made it possible for 20,000 children to receive monthly books for two years.

“We don’t know if California will ever experience a period of sustained surplus like this again, so the governor’s focus on making systems work better and further enhancing services and programs created through previous state budgets is a truly important step toward building a more holistic and responsive system of supports for children and families,” said Kim Belshé, executive director at First 5 LA. “Recognizing the COVID crisis continues to challenge our families, the budget proposal wisely includes much needed investments to expand child care capacity, increase reimbursement rates for early learning providers and provide greater flexibility so home visiting models can help meet the diverse needs of families across the state. There is no better investment we can make than in the well-being of our youngest children, which is why this second year of surplus is critical to building more equitable, accessible and quality public systems for California’s families.”

Central to the governor’s budget proposal is funding for the implementation of previously created supports and services for families. The First 5 network will continue to work in the near and long-term to ensure the proposed investments are implemented to fully advance the health and well-being of California’s youngest children and provide the resources and support their families need during these critical years.

“We support Governor Newsom’s investments in ensuring our youngest children can thrive,” said Deborah Reidy Kelch, interim executive director for First 5 Association of California. “Due to the pandemic, disparities in our communities have never been more exposed. The state’s historic budget surplus represents an unprecedented opportunity to enact structural, lasting reforms that improve systems and strengthen the safety net for infants, toddlers, and their families. First 5 Association looks forward to sharing our experience in communities and early childhood development to help the administration and legislature continue to advance the well-being of young children and their families.”

The governor’s budget proposal includes important investments related to early brain development, including home visiting, early intervention services, quality pre-K and early literacy:

- \$50 million to expand voluntary home visiting services for children aged zero to three, which provide a range of supportive services to pregnant and newly parenting families in California. These services help improve health outcomes in key areas ranging from low-birth weight and infant mortality to immunizations and language development.
- \$10 million one-time General Fund to expand early literacy efforts by developing a partnership between California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and First 5 California to administer a statewide program to provide multilingual books and early literacy programming for families with young children.
- \$2 million one-time General Fund to incorporate early identification for learning disabilities into the state's preschool assessment tools, including a process for follow-up by expert evaluators, and \$60 million one-time Proposition 98 General Fund to provide training for educators on effective use of these tools.
- \$5.8 billion (\$2.3 billion General Fund) for child care programs, including support for multi-year commitment to rate increases, supplemental funding to providers, infrastructure grant program funding, and eventually expanding child care access.
- \$10.6 million in continued investment through June 30, 2023 for the California Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program to support the mental health needs of children, families, and child care providers.
- Promoting school readiness by providing access to transitional kindergarten for all four-year-olds and to public preschool for all income-eligible three-year-olds, in full-inclusion settings.
- While some families will choose to send their four-year-old to transitional kindergarten, others will have the choice to access State Preschool. The Budget invests \$197.8 million Proposition 98 General Fund and \$110.6 million General Fund to increase state preschool program adjustment factors for students with disabilities and dual language learners.
- Extension of ACEs provider training with a one-time \$135.1 million (\$67.6 million mental health services fund, remainder is federal funds), over a three-year period to extend Medi-Cal provider training for ACEs screenings.

The First 5 Network appreciates investments proposed in the 2022-23 budget and we are prepared to collaborate with the governor and legislators to bring positive changes to California's youngest children and families. We will work closely with the governor and First 5 Network partners on the final budget revisions that are expected in May 2022.

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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

--more--

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.