

2023 POLICY PRIORITIES



First 5 Association of California (F5AC) advocates for California's youngest children and their families to ensure that they have the supports to thrive in school and life. Grounded in a whole child / whole family framework with an intentional focus on children prenatal to 3-years-old, First 5 is a conduit for change during this critical stage of development — building comprehensive and integrated early childhood systems of care that advance equity, prevention strategies and systems coordination.

F5AC works to advance state and federal policies that support the First 5 Network and infrastructure and cultivate opportunity for all of California's young children and families. We do this while centering the fact that low-income communities, communities of color, and historically marginalized Californians face disproportionate impacts due to systemic racism, wealth inequality and natural disasters.

Policy Priorities



Resilient Families

- Ensure California families have access to relevant and effective supports in a timely manner.
- Increase family economic supports, so that families can provide stable, thriving homes in which to raise children.



Sustainability and Scale

- Secure funding to offset the impact of Proposition 31 flavored tobacco ban and declining tobacco tax revenue. This declining revenue is a threat to First 5's infrastructure and service provision for early childhood health, learning and prevention strategies.
- Promote local First 5 commissions as foundational community implementers, intermediaries, fiscal agents and thought partners for programs, policies and state initiatives that seek to improve child and family outcomes.
- Preserve existing First 5 funding.
- Preserve recent California policy achievements and state investments that will improve outcomes for young children (e.g., continuous eligibility for Medi-Cal from birth through age 5, investments in home visiting and child care).



Comprehensive Health and Development

- Support investments to advance prevention, care coordination, screenings and multi-generational supports through Medi-Cal.
- Strengthen the systems of early identification and referral to appropriate intervention services for young children.
- Seek to eliminate racial inequities in maternal and infant health outcomes, including through removing systemic barriers to care for people of color, eliminating systemically racist practices and increasing culturally relevant services for birthing people.
- Increase access to community-based Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) programs that effectively prevent and respond to trauma, promote resilience and identify concerns early.
- Secure increased investments in the IECMH workforce to create a robust network of trained providers.



Quality Early Learning

- Stabilize, strengthen and scale early care and learning opportunities, with a focus on infant and toddler care.
- Promote equitable access and affordability across the mixed delivery system – system strengthening, workforce and quality improvement support to promote nurturing relationships between providers, caregivers and children.