



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First 5 California Launches “Dragon Song” Campaign Aimed at Supporting Young Children’s Mental Health

Dragon Song and campaign offers strategies in managing children’s stress

(SACRAMENTO, CA - October 11, 2022) - In a proactive effort to help families manage everyday stressors, First 5 California (F5CA) is launching a new campaign that aims to educate on the importance of breathing as a powerful tool to help families and children deal with stress.

From school shootings to inflation to a global pandemic, families across the world have experienced a number of stressful situations in the last couple of years. Combined with everyday stressors, such as food insecurity, health care issues, or unreliable transportation, these events can have a significant impact on families, changing home dynamics that can adversely affect a child's mental health.

The goal of **F5CA’s Dragon Song** campaign is to demonstrate to parents and caregivers of children ages 0-5 how to model a fun breathing technique in the form of a dragon roar to help children self-soothe when experiencing stressful emotions that may show up as tantrums. By showing caregivers how to teach children to self-regulate emotions, they can be better equipped to support the fight-or-flight response that children often experience with certain stressors.

“Understanding and supporting the emotions of young children can be challenging for many parents and caregivers,” said Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, First 5 California Executive Director. “Through the Dragon Song campaign, we hope to equip families with helpful self-regulation tools, like deep breathing, that can be educational and interactive while helping model behaviors that can de-escalate or reverse stressful situations.”

Biologically, stressful events trigger anxiety that then impact the sympathetic nervous system, a network of nerves that helps activate the fight-or-flight response in humans when faced with demanding situations. To balance the impact, the parasympathetic nervous system — the network of nerves that relaxes the body during periods of stress — activates to help with relaxation through deep breathing exercises, like those included in the Dragon Song campaign. Additionally, [research shows](#) different emotions have different breathing patterns, and changing breathing patterns can help regulate emotions.

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The campaign will kick off with the release of the Dragon Song and [webpage](#) covering the importance of managing everyday stress in young children and how breathing exercises can help parents teach kids to self-soothe and avoid tantrums, all while encouraging bonding.

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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.cfc.ca.gov.