



STRATEGIC PLAN | 2025-2028

Creating Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments for California's Children and Families



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Letter From Our Executive Director



Dear California Families and Partners,

Every child deserves the opportunity to grow up in an environment that supports their healthy development and allows them to thrive. Across California, parents and caregivers are working tirelessly to provide these opportunities for their children. Still, too many families continue to face systemic barriers—including economic insecurity, a lack of affordable, high-quality early learning, and inequitable access to healthcare—that make it harder for families to give their children the strong start they deserve. These challenges are not simply personal struggles; they are the result of inequitable systems that have long failed to meet the needs of all families.

In 1998, Californians took a bold step to change this reality by passing Proposition 10, creating a dedicated funding source to support young children and families. Over the past 25 years, First 5 California has played a vital role in shaping early childhood systems, convening partners to advance collective impact, and advocating for policy change. These efforts have resulted in billions of dollars in increased early childhood investments in transitional kindergarten, paid family leave, home visiting, and other programs. However, as California’s public health landscape shifts and tobacco tax revenues decline, we must reimagine how to sustain and strengthen early childhood investments.

Our 2025–2028 Strategic Plan reflects this moment of transition. Over the next four years, First 5 California will focus on four highest-impact leadership roles:

- **Driving Policy and Systems Change**—Advocating for bold, evidence-based policies at the state and federal level that remove barriers for families and prioritize early childhood.

- **Amplifying Public Awareness**—Promoting the importance of early childhood investment and educating communities on preventing and addressing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the toxic stress response they can cause.

- **Facilitating Alignment and Coordination of State Agencies**—Strengthening cross-agency collaboration to create a seamless, effective system of care for children from prenatal to age five.

- **Sustaining and Expanding Investments**—Identifying innovative funding strategies to ensure the First 5 network’s impact remains strong, even as traditional revenue sources decline.

This work unfolds against a shifting political and economic landscape, requiring us to remain agile, data-driven, and proactive in our leadership. Our ability to advocate for sustainable state funding, improve system efficiency, and strengthen policy alignment will be critical to ensuring that California remains a national leader in early childhood investment and equitable outcomes.

The challenges facing families are complex, but our commitment is unwavering. Working alongside state agencies, county First 5 commissions, policymakers, and community partners, we will continue to build a future where every child—regardless of background or circumstance—has the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to thrive.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jackie Thu-Huong Wong".

Jackie Thu-Huong Wong (she/her)
Executive Director



SECTION 1

Vision, Approach, and Theory Of Change

Vision for the Future

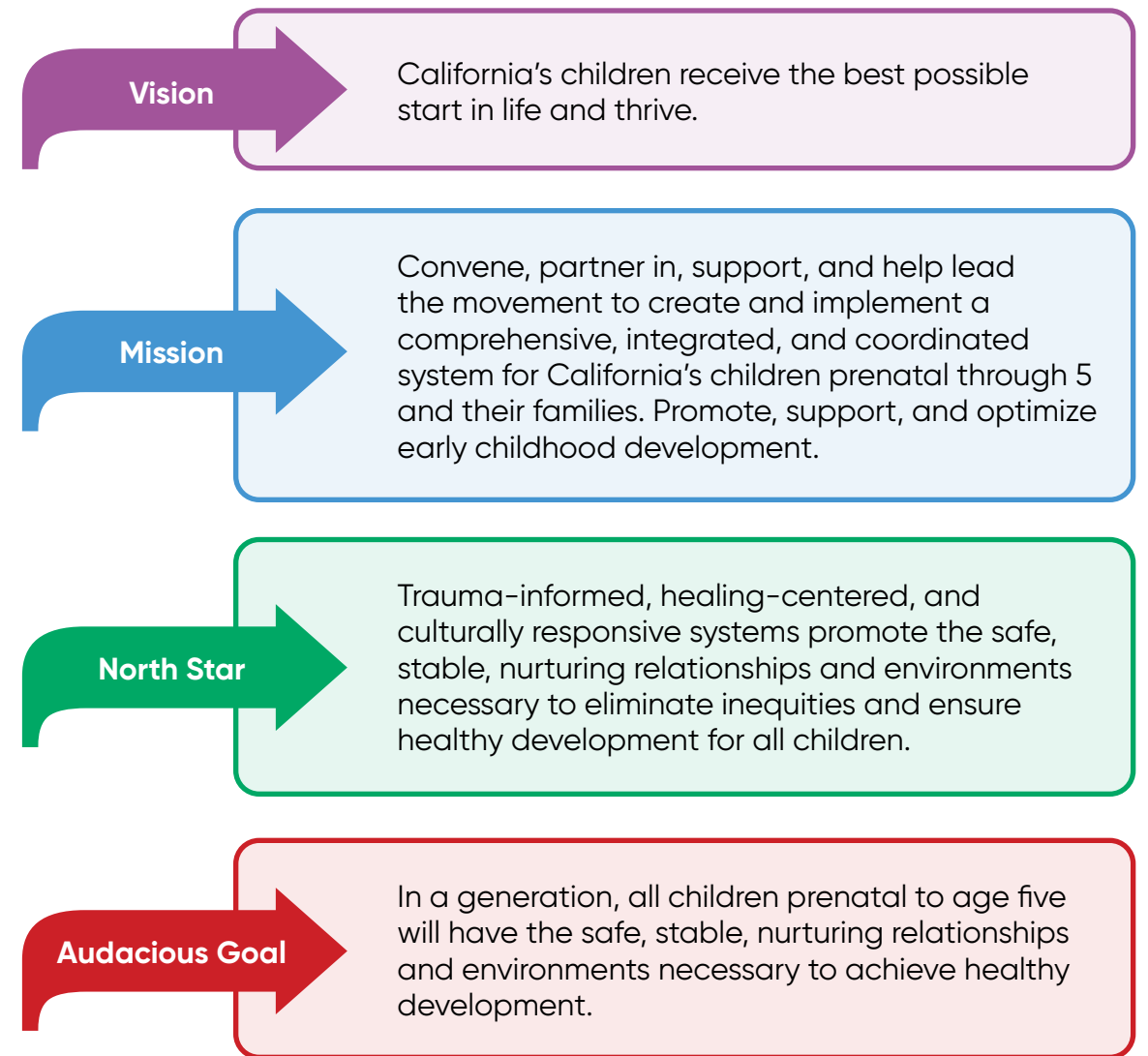
Continuing to drive change for California's children and families

THIS STRATEGIC PLAN is grounded in the voter mandate that seeded and continues to fund First 5 California and the First 5 county commissions. Passed in 1998, Proposition 10 created a funding mechanism to allocate tax revenue from the sale of tobacco products to the newly established California Children and Families Commission (rebranded as First 5 California) and 58 county commissions across the state. Proposition 10 directed the First 5 Network to champion the well-being and school readiness of children from prenatal to age five, working toward a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated system for California's youngest children and their families. With a mandate to promote early childhood health, education, and family resilience, First 5s have been working to address systemic

inequities to ensure all children—especially those in underserved communities—have the resources they need to thrive.

Proposition 10's vision continues to guide First 5 California's work through First 5 California's Vision and Mission (approved in 2014), as well as its North Star and Audacious Goal (approved in 2021). Together, these four bold statements have guided the 2025–2028 strategic plan by establishing what First 5 California is working toward, what it will take to get there, and its approach to driving meaningful change.

The plan that follows is designed to guide First 5 California's investments and priorities over the next four years, ultimately working toward real positive impact for families.



Systems Change Approach

Transformative change requires effective and equitable systems



FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA'S approach to systems change is grounded in the understanding that many of our current systems, both state and federal, reinforce inequities for children and families—and that First 5 California has a critical role to play in building better systems for California's children that will result in safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments.

Evidence shows that disparities at birth stem from economic inequality and are rooted in structural racism—in addition to sexism, ableism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination. Further, an enduring culture of white supremacy leads to disparate views of communities' worth, deservingness, and value, as well as systems, policies, and interpersonal experiences that negatively affect California's children. White supremacy culture perpetuates a historic lack

of investment in marginalized communities and ultimately hurts all communities across the state. When child and family-serving systems—including early learning and care, housing, health care, social services, and many more—are trauma-informed, healing-centered, and culturally responsive, they better support young people and their families.

Transformative change at a state, county, and community level demands a coordinated, collaborative, multi-faceted approach across a wide variety of policies and systems. The existing leadership of nonprofits, communities, and government agencies working to support families is a tremendous asset to build on. First 5 California will help focus, amplify, and accelerate our partners' collective work to maximize impact.





Theory of Change

First 5 California will advance coordinated policy, systems, and narrative change needed for transformative change



TO ENSURE ALL children from prenatal to age five in California grow up with safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, we need targeted policies, effective government agencies, and strong community-based organizations, working cohesively to support families. Transformative systems change is especially necessary if we strive to address decades of structural barriers and systemic racism that have negatively impacted families across the state.

Through collective effort, we can create buffers against the negative impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the toxic stress response, address childhood poverty and its detrimental impacts, and increase access to high-quality healthcare and early learning and care. Driven by the voter mandate of Proposition 10, First 5 California is uniquely positioned to use its platform to engage a

diverse network of stakeholders – including early childhood advocates, government officials, parent organizers, practitioners and educators, and many others – to advance a bold vision, foster shared understanding, and coordinate efforts toward ambitious goals.

We have heard a decisive call from our partners for First 5 California to support increased coordination and collaboration of the early childhood field. As a catalyst, convener, broadcaster, and advocate, First 5 California will use its platform to advance state and federal policy, align state agencies around shared priorities, shape public narratives, and strengthen the First 5 Network. Over the next four years, our network of partners advancing priorities critical to the well-being of children prenatal to age five will be more effective, better resourced, and better coordinated. Together, we will ensure a bright future for every child.

Roles

First 5 California will play several roles driving toward better outcomes for children and families

First 5 California will play four roles...

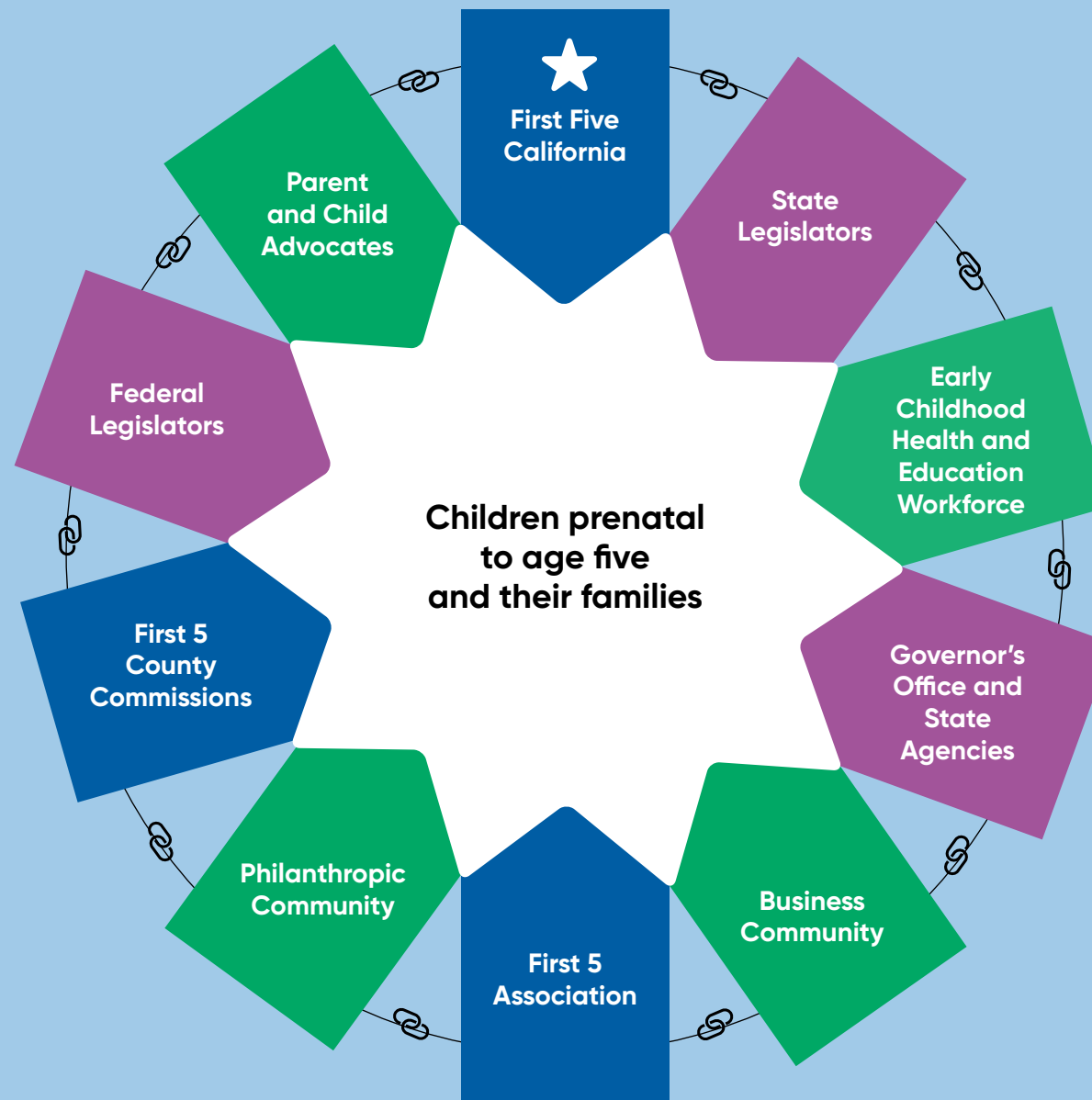


Partnering with a diverse network of early childhood actors...



To collectively advance toward the audacious goal

- CONVENE** and connect early childhood stakeholders to share knowledge and act on aligned priorities
- ADVOCATE** for state and federal policies that address barriers to children's health and wellbeing
- BROADCAST** information and resources related to healthy child development, preventing ACEs, and addressing the toxic stress response ACEs induce
- CATALYZE** and build the body of research on priority initiatives to deepen the impact of programs and policies



In a generation, all children prenatal to age five will have the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to achieve healthy development.



SECTION 2

Key Activities and Milestones



Strategies Overview

First 5 California will deploy four strategies to advance systems change

TO BRING THIS THEORY of change to life, First 5 California will focus on four primary strategies, each with specific roles, activities, and milestones to assess our progress toward them.

STRATEGIES	ROLES	MILESTONES
<p>Advocate for state and federal policies that strengthen early learning, health, and family economic stability to ensure all children prenatal to age five can thrive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catalyze new policy solutions ● Convene and connect stakeholders around shared policy priorities ● Advocate for policies that support young children and their families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First 5 California and its partners align on policies and actions that support its Audacious Goal, while countering efforts that undermine progress ● First 5 California and its partners strengthen collaborative advocacy efforts that include the First 5 Network, advocates, and other stakeholders ● State and/or federal lawmakers advance policy priorities that directly support children prenatal to age five to have greater access to safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments ● State and/or federal lawmakers embed prenatal to age five priorities in policies that impact the safety and stability of children and families more broadly
<p>Build public awareness and access to resources that mitigate ACEs and their negative impacts, and promote healthy child development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Broadcast information and resources to enable families, caregivers, and educators to meet the needs of children prenatal to age five 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First 5 California's Stronger Starts campaign reaches a majority of California parents, caregivers, and educators ● Californians report increased awareness and understanding of toxic stress response and strategies to prevent and buffer against ACEs ● California parents & caregivers report increased knowledge of skills and resources related to providing safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for their children at home ● California's residents and business community report increased support for greater access to affordable childcare for all California families
<p>Facilitate alignment between California's government agencies to advance priority issues and policy implementation that positively impact children prenatal to age five and their families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catalyze new innovations and quality standards ● Convene and connect stakeholders to identify shared policy priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First 5 county commissions, state agencies, and advocates collaborate on implementing policies and programs that support children prenatal to age five and their families ● Through Quality Counts California, First 5 California and its partners provide families with actionable information and resources about the quality of early care and education ● State agency programs increasingly align with First 5 California's goal to ensure safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children prenatal to age five and their families ● First 5 California and partners align on and advance priority improvements to population-level data systems focusing on children prenatal to age five
<p>Support and amplify the leadership of the First 5 Network to effectively advocate for the priorities of families with young children in their counties and the financial sustainability of child serving programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catalyze new resources and strategies ● Convene First 5 county commissions to foster alignment and collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First 5 Network and its partners align on a shared financial sustainability plan and approach to growing resources for children prenatal to age five ● First 5 county commissions have increased access to financial and technical assistance resources including the funding playbook ● First 5 Network reports strengthened culture and systems that promote knowledge exchange and co-creation of shared priorities

Field Indicators

Understanding change in our communities



WHILE FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA

focuses on systems change to support children from prenatal to age five, we remain committed to understanding the collective impact we and our many partners have on families. To do this, we will track four field indicators using publicly available data, providing a consistent view of conditions affecting young children and families. While we alone cannot take responsibility for changes reflected in these indicators, they offer valuable insights to inform our actions.



Experience of ACEs:

The percentage of children prenatal to age five who have experienced two or more ACEs

Healthy Child Development:

The percentage of children birth to age five receiving developmental screenings

Early Childhood Education:

The percentage of children birth to age five in high-quality early learning environments

Childhood Poverty:

The percentage of children birth to age five living in households with incomes more than two times the federal poverty line

Strategy 1:

Advocate for state and federal policies that strengthen learning, health, and family economic stability to ensure all children prenatal to age five can thrive

FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA IS the only state agency solely dedicated to strengthening and improving systems that positively impact Californians from prenatal to age five. First 5 California will continue to invest financial resources and staff capacity to catalyze new policy solutions, convene stakeholders on shared priorities, and advocate for policies that support young children and their families.

The 2025–2028 Strategic Plan will overlap with two state legislative cycles. During this time, First 5 California will prioritize policies that together work to improve systems and supports for families to ensure all children have the safe, stable, nurturing relationship and environments required to minimize the prevalence of ACEs and address the toxic stress response. In particular, First 5 California aims to:

- **Expand affordable access to healthcare** to ensure children prenatal to age five have equitable access to care, including screenings, preventative medicine, and mental health services.
- **Grow economic and housing security of California's children and families** by investing in financial stability, food security, and housing supports, including a focus on fully activating the role of fathers in caregiving.
- **Strengthen early learning and care systems** to enable all children prenatal to age five to have access to high-quality, affordable childcare, including ensuring the early learning workforce has adequate compensation and resources.
- **Secure long-term investments in comprehensive prenatal to age five systems** by supporting funding that prioritizes families and early childhood development to help sustain the work of the First 5 Network and meet the diverse needs of California's counties and communities.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

First 5 California will work with its partners to articulate and advance policy priorities, while increasing policymakers' awareness of early brain development and the critical role safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments play in children's learning and growth. Specifically, it will work to:

- **Develop and advance an annual policy agenda** that aligns with the above priorities, taking into account the context of the evolving legislative landscape and community needs.
- **Convene and engage in coalitions** working to identify and advance shared priorities, including the ECE Coalition, CA Work and Family Coalition, and CalEITC Coalition.
- **Educate state and federal lawmakers** about the importance of prioritizing policies that support families and children prenatal to age five.
- **Partner with philanthropy** to coordinate activities and investments in support of advocacy efforts.
- **Acknowledge and celebrate policy makers and civic leaders** who champion prenatal to age five priorities.



Milestones to Track Our Progress

- ♥ First 5 California and its partners align on policies and actions that support its Audacious Goal, while countering efforts that undermine progress
- ♥ State and/or federal lawmakers advance policy priorities that directly support children prenatal to age five to have greater access to safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments
- ♥ First 5 California and its partners strengthen collaborative advocacy efforts that include the First 5 Network, advocates, and other stakeholders
- ♥ State and/or federal lawmakers embed prenatal to age five priorities in policies that impact the safety and stability of children and families more broadly

Strategy 2:

Build public awareness and access to resources that mitigate ACEs, and their negative impacts, and promote healthy child development

FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA'S role as a public broadcaster is established under Proposition 10 which earmarks 30% of the agency's funding to educate parents and the community on child health and development. Since its inception, the statute has recognized the importance of engaging and educating the public about the importance of early childhood issues and helping families navigate the complex web of resources available to them. Building on its Stronger Starts campaign (launched in 2023) and its Raise CA Strong campaign (launched in 2024), First 5 California will continue its broadcasting role, using its reach to provide families, caregivers, educators, businesses, and communities with information and resources to meet the needs of children prenatal to age five.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

First 5 California will use its public presence to increase awareness of the toxic stress response caused by ACEs, and equip caretakers, educators, and families with tools to support healthy child development. Specifically, it will work to:

- **Raise awareness among caregivers about the negative impact of the toxic stress response caused by ACEs,** its detrimental impact on children's health, and practical ways to protect young children from its effects by continuing the Stronger Starts campaign, a multi-media, multilingual campaign including TV, radio, digital, print, and experiential events.
- **Build public support for resources for families that support healthy child development,** including by continuing its Raise CA Strong campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of affordable childcare.
- **Provide families with access to culturally responsive and evidence-based tools and resources** to support healthy child development and education.

Milestones to Track Our Progress

- ♥ First 5 California's Stronger Starts campaign reaches a majority of California parents, caregivers, and educators
- ♥ Californians report increased awareness and understanding of toxic stress response and strategies to prevent and buffer against ACEs
- ♥ California parents & caregivers report increased knowledge of skills and resources related to providing safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for their children at home
- ♥ California's residents and business community report increased support for greater access to affordable childcare for all California families



Strategy 3:

Facilitate alignment between California's government agencies to advance priority issues and policy implementation that positively impact children prenatal to age five and their families

TO BUILD A MORE cohesive and responsive system that promotes safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, stakeholders across child and family-serving entities—state agencies, First 5 county commissions, community-based organizations—have identified the continued need for greater coordination and collaboration.

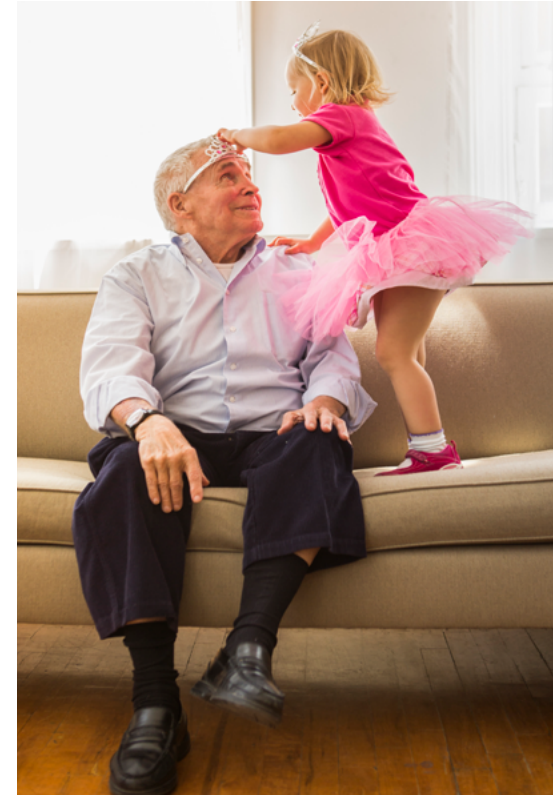
As the only state agency solely focused on young children and families, First 5 California is a key conduit for aligning and coordinating efforts between agencies serving children from prenatal to age five, such as the California Department of Education, the California Department of Social Services, and the California

Health and Human Services Agency. With strong relationships across state agencies, First 5 California is well positioned to connect and convene stakeholders to drive interagency alignment, working toward coordinated funding, reduced administrative barriers, and aligned strategies that optimize services for families. Additionally, leveraging its research and state-wide purview, First 5 California will catalyze innovation in support of healthy child development and establishing effective early care quality standards across the state. First 5 California will foster collaboration and alignment to ensure programs work for the children and families they are intended to serve.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

First 5 California will collaborate with its partners to strengthen the platforms and infrastructure required to support effective program implementation across California's agencies. It aims to create a more cohesive, responsive network of supports that ensure families and children can easily access the resources they need for healthy child development. Specifically, it will work to:

- **Partner with state agencies and other organizations to pilot or support effective** implementation of programs that target the needs of children prenatal to age five, ensuring state investments are coordinated and accessible to families across systems.
- **Support research and data collection that informs equitable and effective program implementation,** including assessing existing programs to better understand their impact and understanding and informing efforts to improve access to integrated, coordinated, statewide datasets on children prenatal to age five.
- **Form a working group including representatives at state agencies, First 5 counties, and community-based organizations** to explore ways to make First 5 California's Kit for New Parents more accessible, culturally responsive, healing centered, and trauma informed
- **Continue to partner with relevant state agencies to fully implement Quality Counts California,** the statewide quality improvement system, working toward a sustainable, statewide approach to assessing and tracking the quality of early learning and care programs.
- **Position First 5 California's bi-annual summit to enable collaboration,** creating forums for state agencies, community-based organizations, and the First 5 Network to convene and connect on policy priorities, program best practices, and research.



Milestones to Track Our Progress

- ♥ First 5 county commissions, state agencies, and advocates collaborate on implementing policies and programs that support children prenatal to age five and their families
- ♥ Through Quality Counts California, First 5 California and its partners provide families with actionable information and resources about the quality of early care and education
- ♥ State agency programs increasingly align with First 5 California's goal to ensure safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children prenatal to age five and their families
- ♥ First 5 California and partners align on and advance priority improvements to population-level data systems focusing on children prenatal to age five

Strategy 4:

Support and amplify the leadership of the First 5 Network to effectively advocate for the priorities of families with young children in their counties and the financial sustainability of child serving programs



THE FIRST 5 NETWORK, which includes the 58 First 5 county commissions, the First 5 Association, and First 5 California, is unique to California, playing a pivotal role in improving the outcomes for children prenatal to age five. Each county commission serves as a key systems expert, ensuring that children and families can access services tailored to their local context. However, declining tobacco tax revenue has created financial sustainability challenges for both the county commissions and the state commission. First 5 California will catalyze new resources to support the ongoing success of First 5 county commissions by investing in capacity building and partnering to explore new funding channels. It will also convene First 5 county commissions to foster alignment; support collaboration with one another and with other agencies; and enable counties to effectively implement state-wide investments at the local level.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

First 5 California will continue to support the First 5 Network to build capacity and sustainability, enabling it to better weather the unpredictable, including financial and workforce uncertainties. Specifically, First 5 California will work to:

- **Invest in financial sustainability** to equitably support California’s small population counties by augmenting their Proposition 10 revenue and establishing a resilience initiative to provide additional funding for emergency situations and capacity building.
- **Explore and advocate for new funding mechanisms** in partnership with the First 5 county commissions and First 5 Association, including state-level funding, dedicated general fund allocations, Medicaid reimbursement pathways, and public-private partnerships, to sustain early childhood investments and ensure county commissions have the financial resources needed to implement high-impact programs.

- **Align stakeholders on a strategy that builds financial sustainability of child serving programs**, bringing together the First 5 Association and county commissions, as well as advocates, funders, and other stakeholders to identify efficiencies and innovative solutions.
- **Provide technical assistance and capacity building** to support county commissions to expand access to financial resources and ensure that state-level investments are effectively implemented at the local level.



Milestones to Track Our Progress

- ♥ First 5 Network and its partners align on a shared financial sustainability plan and approach to growing resources for children prenatal to age five
- ♥ First 5 county commissions have increased access to financial and technical assistance resources including the funding playbook
- ♥ First 5 Network reports strengthened culture and systems that promote knowledge exchange and co-creation of shared priorities



Conclusion



THIS IS AN AMBITIOUS strategy—one that reflects the urgency of ensuring all children from prenatal to age five in California have the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary for healthy development. We are excited to work together over the next four years to build stronger systems that bring us closer to this vision. By fostering partnerships and aligning efforts across the field, we can create a more coordinated and effective ecosystem that drives meaningful

change for young children and their families. While the challenges ahead are significant, so is our collective commitment. We look forward to sharing our progress, learning together, and inviting your partnership to share ideas and help advance key initiatives in the years to come.

To learn more about First 5 California's progress, visit our website: <https://www.cafc.ca.gov/>



SECTION 3

Appendix



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2028 | AT A GLANCE

Creating safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for California's children and families



Strategic Foundations	<p>NORTH STAR Trauma-informed, healing-centered, and culturally responsive systems promote the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to eliminate inequities and ensure healthy development for all children.</p>	<p>AUDACIOUS GOAL In a generation, all children prenatal to age five will have the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to achieve healthy development.</p>	<p>THEORY OF CHANGE To ensure children prenatal to age five in California grow up with safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments, systems must work together to support families and address structural inequities. Guided by Proposition 10, First 5 California will use its unique platform to align partners, shape public understanding, and drive coordinated action. Over the next four years, these collective efforts will strengthen the early childhood field, helping to prevent adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), address childhood poverty, and expand access to vital services for young children and their families.</p>
Roles	<p>Convene and connect early childhood stakeholders to share knowledge and act on aligned priorities</p>	<p>Advocate for state and federal policies that address barriers to children's health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Broadcast information and resources related to healthy child development, preventing ACEs, and addressing the toxic stress response ACEs induce</p> <p>Catalyze and build the body of research on priority initiatives to deepen the impact of programs and policies</p>
Strategies	<p>1. Advocate for state and federal policies that strengthen early learning, health, and family economic stability to ensure all children prenatal to age five can thrive</p>	<p>2. Build public awareness and access to resources that mitigate ACEs and their impacts, and promote healthy child development</p>	<p>3. Facilitate alignment between California's government agencies to advance priority issues and policy implementation that impact children prenatal to age five and their families</p> <p>4. Support and amplify the leadership of the First 5 Network to effectively advocate for the priorities of families with young children in their counties and the financial sustainability of child serving programs</p>

Glossary

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs):

Stressful or traumatic events that occur in early childhood—such as exposure to violence, abuse, neglect, or instability—that can negatively impact a child’s development, health, and well-being across their lifespan.

Cultural competence:

The ability to understand, respect, and effectively engage with people whose cultures, languages, and beliefs differ from your own.

Environments:

All the physical and social spaces where children interact, including homes, childcare settings, medical facilities, parks, libraries, and other community spaces.

Equity:

Fair and just treatment, opportunities, and access to resources for all people, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, or other identities.

Field indicators:

Select publicly available, population-level data First 5 California and its partners can use to monitor conditions affecting safe, stable, and nurturing environments for children prenatal to five and their families.

Healing-centered:

A strengths-based approach to trauma that emphasizes healing, resilience, and collective well-being, rather than focusing on harm or deficits.

Milestones:

Key outputs First 5 California will track to measure progress under the 2025–2028 strategic plan.

Nurturing:

Children have access to adults who are warm, sensitive, and consistently respond to and meet their diverse developmental needs.

Relationships:

Connections between children and the adults who care for and support them—including family, caregivers, educators, healthcare providers, and others.

Safe:

Children are free from fear and protected from physical and emotional harm in both relationships and environments.

Stable:

Children’s emotional, social, and physical environments are predictable and consistent.

Strategies:

The focused actions First 5 California will take to organize its efforts and advance toward its North Star and Audacious Goal.

Systems change:

A deep shift in policies, practices, relationships, resource flows, and mental models that shape a system. Systems change focuses on addressing root causes—rather than symptoms—of social and environmental challenges to drive lasting, equitable change.

Systems change approach:

First 5 California’s analysis of what is required to advance the systemic change needed to achieve its North Star and Audacious Goal.

Theory of change:

First 5 California’s guiding hypothesis about how its work can most effectively lead to its North Star and Audacious Goal.

Toxic stress response:

A prolonged stress reaction to repeated or severe adversity. In young children, when left unbuffered by caring adults, toxic stress can disrupt development and have long-term health and learning impacts.

White supremacy culture:

Coined by advocate Tema Okun, “white supremacy culture” describes how dominant norms and values in organizations and institutions reinforce whiteness as the standard and uphold other forms of oppression. First 5 California uses this term to explicitly name and address the systemic racism that harms all children and families through ongoing disinvestment in equity-centered systems. whitesupremacyculture.info

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Acknowledgements

THIS STRATEGIC PLANNING process began in 2022 when First 5 California retained Arabella Advisors to complete a comprehensive review of First 5 California’s operations, financial resources, and investments which yielded a set of strategic and operational recommendations to serve as the basis of this strategic plan. In 2024, First 5 California engaged Arabella Advisors to lead

a collaborative, multi-layered process to develop this strategic plan that included several focus groups and interviews with the field of early childhood, First 5 California commissioners and staff, the First 5 Network, and more.

First 5 California extends its deepest gratitude to the many voices and hands who helped

shape this strategic plan over the last two years. This effort was made possible through the deep dedication of our staff and commissioners, candid insight from a diverse coalition of early childhood field actors including representatives from the First 5 Network, state agencies, advocates, subject matter experts, and many more.

Strategy Development Timeline

