California’s 58 county First 5 commissions fund local programs and systems-change efforts to support the healthy development of children from birth through 5 years of age and their families. In Fiscal Year 2012-13, First 5 county commissions invested over $519 million to improve the lives of 978,983 children.

QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

First 5 increases the quality of and access to early learning and education for young children. Over a third of all First 5 investments are dedicated to ensuring children have access to high-quality early learning programs. In recent years, commissions have led the state’s efforts to create quality rating systems and supports to help programs reach these new targets. Last year, First 5 county commissions invested $132 million in high-quality programs serving 93,000 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

First 5 emphasizes early identification and support for children with special needs. As many as 12 to 17 percent of all children experience developmental delays or disabilities significant enough to impact how they learn and grow. Last year, county commissions invested over $43 million in screenings and interventions for developmental delays using tools recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Over 115,000 children received comprehensive screenings and/or assessments, with 21,000 receiving follow-up services for identified special needs.

ORAL HEALTH

First 5 provides critical oral health services, including screenings, fluoride varnish, and care coordination. One in three children between ages 1 and 5 do not have access to dental insurance, and a third have never visited a dentist. County commissions invested $15 million last year to improve young children’s oral health, serving over 193,000 children. In many counties, First 5 is the only funder of dental care for young low-income children.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

First 5 supports at-risk and isolated families through targeted intensive family support services. Research shows that family support programs must empower adults in their roles as parents, nurturers, and providers. County commissions invested $66 million last year to provide intensive programs for over 68,000 low-income or at-risk parents, including evidence-based skills training sessions often offered in one-stop Family Resource Centers funded entirely by First 5.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CARE

First 5 supports mothers and newborns through prenatal care, breastfeeding assistance, and home visitation. County commissions invested over $24 million last year in education and supports for pregnant women and infants, reaching over 117,000 mothers. In addition, over 60% of county commissions offered home visitation programs, which result in improved family and child outcomes such as increased school readiness and fewer children in social welfare and juvenile corrections systems.