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## Legislature Makes Important Strides for Young Children and Sends State Budget to Governor for Signature

*Budget Updates Child Care Eligibility and Funding, Building Foundation for Necessary Investments Ahead*

**LOS ANGELES** – The \$126 billion state budget proposal sent to Governor Jerry Brown is a critical step forward in addressing the needs of young children and families, according to leading early childhood advocates in Los Angeles County. The FY 2017-18 spending plan announced by both houses of the State Legislature honors a promise outlined in the May Revision to restore funding for almost 3,000 children’s early learning opportunities, and allocates new funding to support critical policy changes that support access to early care and education services for more families.

“A budget is a statement of priorities. We applaud the work of Speaker Rendon, Senate Pro Tem de Leon, and the Women’s Caucus in championing the needs of families with young children,” said Kim Belshé, Executive Director of First 5 LA. “The budget starts California on a path to opportunity and prosperity. At the same time, we also must recognize there is significant work ahead to ensure that all of California’s children have a meaningful opportunity to prepare for and succeed in school and life.”

In addition to reaffirming the promise made last year [for multi-year funding](#) to expand child care opportunities and increase provider reimbursement rates, both houses of the Legislature supported new investments to update eligibility for state subsidized programs following increases to the minimum wage and to ensure that foster families have access to child care support.

Highlights on early care and education investments include:

- **Eligibility Update for Subsidized Child Care:** An increase of \$20 million to update the state medium income and to adopt a 12 month eligibility policy for subsidized child care, thereby allowing for an increase in the income allowed to qualify for the benefit. This would provide the opportunity for more low-income families to be eligible for subsidized child care. According to the [California Budget & Policy Center](#), a family of three can make no more than \$42,216 to be eligible for a subsidy. If the Governor approves the Legislature’s proposal, the income limit would rise to \$4,358 a month, or \$52,298 a year.
- **Child Care Access for Foster Care Parents:** An investment of \$15 million to be allocated beginning January 1, 2018 to establish the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (bridge program). This program provides short-term assistance program that would offer vouchers for foster care parents to use to cover the cost of early care and education services. Also, an increase of \$31 million will fund on-going training for child-care providers to recognize and respond to signs of physical, psychological and emotional trauma. The program also would require counties to provide these families with help in navigating the child welfare system.

(MORE)

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## State Budget Sent to Governor a Step Forward- Page 2

Although the proposed budget addresses critical needs for families and young children through modest funding increases, the extreme shortage of early learning opportunities for California's young children remains an urgent issue, especially among families with babies and toddlers. In Los Angeles County, only [41 percent](#) of families with young children have access to child care, and child care centers in the county have the capacity to serve only [13 percent](#) of working parents with infants and toddlers. There is still significant work to be done to make quality early care and education accessible for all families.

The Governor has until June 30 to sign the budget bill approved by both houses of the Legislature into law. The spending plan would take effect on July 1.

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### **ABOUT FIRST 5 LA**

*First 5 LA is a leading early childhood advocacy and public grantmaking organization created by California voters to invest Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues in Los Angeles County. In partnership with others, First 5 LA strengthens families, communities, and systems of services and supports so that all children in L.A. County enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. Please visit [www.first5la.org](http://www.first5la.org) for more information.*

### **ABOUT THE STATE BUDGET PROCESS**

*The State Constitution requires the Governor submit a budget to the Legislature by January 10. Budget subcommittees in the State Assembly and State Senate will review the Governor's proposed budget and begin to craft their versions of the annual spending plan.*

*The Legislature has the authority to approve, modify, or reject the Governor's proposals, add new spending or make other changes that substantially revise the budget as proposed by the Governor. The Legislature typically waits for the May Revision budget update before final budget decisions are made on major programs such as Education, Corrections, and Health and Human Services.*

*The May Revision to the Governor's Budget consists of an update to the Governor's economic and revenue outlook and revises, supplements, or withdraws the policy initiatives included in the Governor's budget proposal from January.*

*The Legislature must pass a budget bill for the upcoming fiscal year by midnight on June 15. The Governor has until June 30 to sign the budget bill into law.*