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 Fitzsimmons
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Contact: Marlene
 (213) 482-7807

Governor Brown Urged to Build Legacy as a Champion for California’s Youngest Children

First 5 LA Urges Billion Dollar Investment in Early Learning for Infants and Toddlers Backs Gov. Brown, Legislative Leaders’ Inclusion of First-ever State-level Support of Home Visiting

LOS ANGELES - This morning Governor Jerry Brown released the [May Revision](#) to his proposed \$199.3 billion State Budget for FY 2018-19, maintaining his promise to increase funding for preschool and provide prenatal and early childhood home visiting services for CalWORKS families. While First 5 LA backs the Governor’s continued inclusion of early childhood funding in his revised budget proposal, we urge the Legislature to significantly increase the state’s commitment to young children by directing a billion dollars to support child care for California’s babies and toddlers.

First 5 LA acknowledges Governor Brown for maintaining his commitment to funding early childhood programs as initially proposed in January. Including new funds for programs like state preschool and home visiting is an important step in prioritizing funding for multiple young children, from pre- and post-natal guidance offered through home visiting to quality early learning.

However, California still lags behind the rest of the nation in support for young children. California’s families face significant challenges. For example, [one out of every five children in California live in poverty, and in L.A. County the child poverty rate is even higher at more than 28%](#). Parents with two children may pay [nearly half their wages for child care in Los Angeles County](#), and statewide more than 1.2 million children do not receive the subsidized child care services for which they are eligible.

Now the 5th largest economy in the world with nearly \$4 billion in greater revenues than projected in his January proposal and a state budget that is the largest in our state’s history, California must seize the opportunity to build a brighter future for our kids.

“Our leaders must prioritize the early learning, health and well-being of young children in policy and budget decisions, for this will shape our collective future,” said Kim Belshé, executive director of First 5 LA, an independent public agency operating in L.A. County, where more than a third of the state’s young children under age 5 reside. “We share the Governor’s interest in planning for the long-term. Knowing our children today will grow up to become tomorrow’s leaders, workforce and taxpayers, we must put our booming economy to work for future generations.”

Among its spending proposals, the May Revision to the State Budget includes investments to support families, such as:

- An increase of 2,959 slots for full-day state preschool, beginning April 1, 2018
- An increase of the reimbursement rate for providers contracting directly with the Department of Education, by approximately 2.8 percent and a proposal to make permanent the temporary hold harmless to the 2016 Regional Market Reimbursement Rate for providers accepting vouchers

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- An increase of \$120 million to establish an online community college providing scheduling flexibility and more accessible learning options for the child developmental workforce
- \$1.3 billion of Prop 56 tobacco tax revenue increase for 2018-19 to be used to expand Medi-Cal and Denti-Cal services, including increased provider reimbursement rates

The budget proposal also outlines the creation of important new programs, which include:

- \$26.7 million for a Home Visiting Initiative pilot program (allocating \$158 million over three years, through 2021) to help parents in the CALWorks program reach self-sufficiency by improving family engagement practices, supporting healthy development of young children and preparing for employment
- The Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program, providing \$167 million in one-time funding to increase the availability of early care and education for children prenatal to 5, especially low-income children and children with exceptional needs

Belshé added the state needs to begin this budget year with funding support for new child care spaces, adequate per-child funding, age appropriate facilities and infrastructure, start-up support, and professional development for all care settings from the continuum of prenatal to five.

“We thank the Governor and Legislative leaders for making significant progress in prioritizing the early learning programs and services that support young children and their families,” Belshé continued. “First 5 LA is a strong supporter of the Governor’s inclusion of family strengthening and home visiting services, a state-level investment that is a first, and should not be the last.”

First 5 LA is part of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition that backed the Legislative Women’s Caucus call for a \$1 billion dollar increase in child care spaces to immediately improve access for California’s families. This would bring funding to 2008 levels, when California was in the throes of the Great Recession.

Since voters approved Proposition 10 in 1998, which created the network of First 5s in each of California’s 58 counties to prioritize young children, much has been learned about early childhood development. [Ninety percent of a child’s brain is developed by age 5](#), making this a critical time for parents and children alike. A fact that, 20 years later, voters still consider a top priority.

“Eighty-seven percent of Californians believe our next governor must invest more in our youngest kids,” Belshé concluded. “Governor Brown has the opportunity to set a pace of prioritizing young children for all other governors to follow.”

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ABOUT FIRST 5 LA

First 5 LA is an independent public agency in Los Angeles that advocates on behalf of parents with young children to help every child, prenatal to age 5, be healthier, safer and better prepared for kindergarten. Knowing 90 percent of a child’s brain is developed by age 5, First 5 LA partners with other county agencies, parents and organizations to help elected officials prioritize funding for early childhood education, health care and other programs that young children and their parents need. Please visit 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.

ABOUT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN CALIFORNIA

- [90 percent](#) of brain development happens in the first five years of life
- California has nearly 1.5 million babies and toddlers, according to Kids Count Data, 2016
- According to a Choose Children 2018 survey, [87 percent of voters polled](#) said the governor should prioritize early childhood education
- [Fewer than 1 in 3 \[28.5%\]](#) young children in California receive timely developmental screenings
- California ranks [40th in the nation](#) in its efforts to support its youngest children
- In addition to preschool and child care, [high-quality home visiting programs](#), like First 5 LA's Welcome Baby program, can increase children's school readiness, improve child health and development, reduce child abuse and neglect, and enhance parents' abilities to support healthy cognitive, language, social-emotional, and physical development
- Parents with two children may pay nearly half their wages for child care in Los Angeles County, according to a [March 2017 report](#) that explores the resources and gaps in the early care and education system within the county.

