

The Early Years Matter

What happens to our youngest children today will impact all of us tomorrow. When we prioritize children at the earliest stages of their lives, we are laying the foundation for our community's social and economic future.



Mission

First 5 LA, in partnership with others, strengthens families, communities, and systems of services and supports so all children in Los Angeles County enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

Goals

To ensure all children in L.A. County enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life, First 5 LA's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan focuses on the following four interlinked outcome areas.

- **Families:** Work with parents and caregivers so they have the skills, knowledge and access to resources they need to support their child's development.
- **Communities:** Increase community capacity to support and promote the safety, healthy development and well-being of children prenatal to age 5 and their families. Support a community's ability to foster safe, healthy, engaged neighborhoods that children and their families thrive.
- **Early Care and Education (ECE):** Increase access to high-quality early care and education.
- **Health-Related Systems:** Increase children's access to quality screening, early intervention and referral to services. Promote the establishment of the Help Me Grow developmental screening system throughout L.A. County. Support the delivery of trauma-informed care by the health, mental health and substance abuse organizations that serve children prenatal to age 5 and their families.

First 5 LA also commissions initiative-level evaluations to discover lessons learned, implementation progress and outcomes. These evaluations are tailored to the particular activities and goals of the initiative.

Key Strategies

- **Research and Development:** Promote widespread use of proven best practices that are grounded in research and real-life application.
- **Public Policy and Advocacy:** Increase public investments of funds dedicated to young children and improve policies that affect those investments.
- **Service Delivery System Improvement:** Increase the quality, effectiveness and coordination of how services are accessed and provided.
- **Provider Training:** Build the knowledge and skills of the people providing support and services to parents and children.
- **Community Capacity Building:** Help individuals and groups that live and work in neighborhoods and communities take greater ownership and responsibility for the children and families who live within them by fostering safe, healthy and vibrant communities.
- **Communications:** Educate the public about the importance of investing in young children and families.

Structure & Leadership

The First 5 LA Board of Commissioners is comprised of 17 members. The nine voting members are appointed by each of the Los Angeles County supervisors and the L.A. County departments of Children and Family Services, Public Health and Mental Health. The Chair of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors also serves as a Chair of the First 5 LA Commission. The Board also includes representatives from other educational, children and family organizations throughout the county.

Funding

First 5 LA was created in 1998 to invest in L.A. County's allocation of funds from California's voter approved Proposition 10 tobacco tax. Since then, First 5 LA has invested more than \$1.9 billion in efforts aimed at providing the best start for children from prenatal to age 5 and their families.

Facts About L.A. County's Young Children

In L.A. County

- There are 650,000 children under the age of 5.
- 214,000 children (ages 0-3) live below the poverty line.
- Only 2.4 percent of infants and toddlers have access to licensed center child care, and 11.4 percent under age 5 have access to licensed family child care.
- As of 2007, only 21.8 percent of children (ages 0-5) had received a developmental screening.
- 19.4 percent of young children are exposed to two or more adverse childhood events that can have a direct impact on their well-being and their overall health as they grow into adulthood.
- In 2015, 52,000 children were identified to the Department of Children and Family Services for possible abuse.