



## Commission Meeting

### A G E N D A

Monday, June 22, 2026, 6:00 pm

First 5 Contra Costa, Conference Center, First Floor

2300 Clayton Road, Concord CA 94520

The Commission meeting will be accessible in-person and via virtual webinar to all members of the public.

Persons who wish to address the Commission during public comment or with respect to an item on the agenda may call in during the meeting by dialing 669-444-9171 or 669-900-6833 or use the "raise your hand" feature in the Zoom app. The Commission Chair may reduce or eliminate the amount of time allotted to read comments at the beginning of each item or public comment period depending on the number of comments and the business of the day. Your patience is appreciated.

Any disclosable public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by the County to a majority of members of First 5 Children and Families Commission less than 96 hours prior to that meeting are available for public inspection at 2300 Clayton Road, Concord, CA 94520, during normal business hours. Staff reports related to items on the agenda are also accessible online at [www.first5coco.org](http://www.first5coco.org).

The First 5 Children and Families Commission will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities planning to attend First 5 Children and Families Commission meetings. Contact Mikele Nelson ([mnelson2@first5coco.org](mailto:mnelson2@first5coco.org)) or 925.655.0390 at least 48 hours before the meeting.

### Virtual Webinar Information:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89192239770>

#### 1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

#### 2.0 Public Comment

*The public may comment on any item of public interest within the jurisdiction of the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission. In accordance with the Brown Act, if a member of the public addresses an item not on the posted agenda, no response, discussion, or action on the item may occur.*

#### 3.0 Approve the Minutes from the May 18, 2026 Special Strategic Planning Retreat and the May 18, 2026 Commission Meeting. Action

#### 4.0 Approval of Consent Calendar Action

*A Commissioner or member of the public may ask that any of the following consent items be removed from the consent calendar for consideration under Item 5.*

##### 4.1 Approve the Contracts Docket.

**4.1.1** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with CocoKids, Inc. to support Quality Matters (QM) services for childcare providers in Contra Costa County to improve the quality of early care and education for children from birth to age 5, in an amount not to exceed \$60,000, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027, contingent upon the award, acceptance, and appropriation of anticipated IMPACT Legacy funds. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Childhood Education Focus Area: Quality Early Learning (\$300,401). Funded 100% by IMPACT Legacy funds.

**4.1.2** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Tandem to implement StoryCycles, a book sharing program, to increase professional development in target classrooms throughout Contra



Costa County, in an amount not to exceed \$50,000, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027, contingent upon the award, acceptance, and appropriation of anticipated IMPACT Legacy funds. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Childhood Education Focus Area: Quality Early Learning (\$300,401). Funded 100% by IMPACT Legacy funds.

- 4.1.3** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Contra Costa Crisis Center to maintain a web-based database of Contra Costa Human Services ([www.211database.org](http://www.211database.org)) for children from birth to age 5 and their families, and to oversee the Help Me Grow 211 Call Center, in an amount not to exceed \$131,800, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Intervention Focus Area: Children's Developmental Needs (\$393,727). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 4.1.4** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Early Childhood Mental Health Program, in an amount not to exceed \$257,500, for early childhood mental health consultation services for children ages 0–5 and their families, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Childhood Education Focus Area: Inclusion in Early Learning (\$375,731). Funded 100% by EHSD Contract funds.
- 4.1.5** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with ASPIRANET (operator of the Antioch First 5 Center located at 300 H Street, Antioch, CA) to provide family support, developmental screening, resource and referral, and community engagement services, in an amount not to exceed \$563,153, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% by Prop 10 funds.
- 4.1.6** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with ASPIRANET (operator of the Delta First 5 Center located at 760 First Street, Brentwood, CA) to provide family support, developmental screening, resource and referral, and community engagement services, in an amount not to exceed \$563,153, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% by Prop 10 funds.
- 4.1.7** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Bay Area Community Resources (operator of the Monument First 5 Center located at 1736 Clayton Road, Concord, CA) to provide family support, developmental screening, resource and referral, and community engagement services, in an amount not to exceed \$563,153, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% by Prop 10 funds.
- 4.1.8** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Bay Area Community Resources (operator of the West County First 5 Center located at 2707 Dover Avenue, San Pablo, CA) to provide family support, developmental screening, resource and referral, and community engagement services, in an amount not to exceed \$754,318, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% by Prop 10 funds.

- 4.1.9** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Lincoln (operator of the East County First 5 Center located at 355 E. Leland Road, Pittsburg, CA) to provide family support, developmental screening, resource and referral, and community engagement services, in an amount not to exceed \$754,318, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% by Prop 10 funds.
- 4.1.10** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Hubbe Inc. to provide QRIS data system hosting and support services, in an amount not to exceed \$82,300, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027, contingent upon the award, acceptance, and appropriation of anticipated HUB grant funds. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Childhood Education Focus Area: Quality Early Learning (\$300,401). Funded 100% by HUB Grant and CSPP Grant funds.
- 4.1.11** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Krisch & Company, An Accountancy Corporation in an amount not to exceed \$65,000 to provide professional accounting services for the term from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026/27 budget line: Administrative Expense: Professional Services (\$286,057). Funded 100% by Prop 10 funds.
- 4.1.12** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Baby Builders, Inc. to organize developmental playgroups, provide curriculum, materials, staffing, site coordination support, and program oversight at the First 5 Centers, in an amount not to exceed \$112,753.74, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Intervention Focus Area: Children's Developmental Needs (\$393,727). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 4.1.13** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with We Care Services for Children to organize developmental playgroups, curriculum, materials, staffing, site coordination support, and program oversight at the First 5 Centers and Pittsburg Unified School District (PUSD), in an amount not to exceed \$128,508.98, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Intervention Focus Area: Children's Developmental Needs (\$393,727). Funded Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation for Ready Kids East County (\$19,000), and Prop 10 funds (\$109,509).
- 4.1.14** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to exercise a lease with JFM Development, Inc. to lease 760 First Street, Brentwood, CA, as the Delta First 5 Center from August 1, 2026 to July 31, 2027, at \$7,875.00 per month. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 4.1.15** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with EarlyChildhood, LLC (DBA Discount School Supply) to provide specialized educational items to support inclusion practices in early learning settings, in an amount not to exceed \$66,000, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Childhood Education Focus Area: Inclusion in Early Learning (\$375,731). Funded 100% by EHSD Contract funds.



- 4.1.16** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with ASPIRANET (operator of the Antioch First 5 Center located at 300 H Street, Antioch, CA) in an amount not to exceed \$189,200 for the expansion of basic needs assistance and fatherhood engagement services at the Antioch First 5 Center for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2028. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: (\$94,600 year-1), (\$94,600 year-2). First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% by an Employment and Human Services Department grant.
- 4.1.17** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with ASPIRANET (operator of the Delta First 5 Center located at 760 1st Street, Brentwood, CA) in an amount not to exceed \$189,200 for the expansion of basic needs assistance and fatherhood engagement services at the Brentwood First 5 Center for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2028. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: (\$94,600 year-1), (\$94,600 year-2). First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% by an Employment and Human Services Department grant.
- 4.1.18** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with Lincoln (operator of the East County First 5 Center located at 355 E. Leland Road, Pittsburg, CA) in an amount not to exceed \$189,200 the expansion of basic needs assistance and fatherhood engagement services at the Pittsburg First 5 Center for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2028. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: (\$94,600 year-1), (\$94,600 year-2). First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). Funded 100% by an Employment and Human Services Department grant.
- 4.2 Approve the Grants Docket.**

  - 4.2.1** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to apply for, accept, and appropriate grant funding from Contra Costa County Office of Education’s California State Preschool Program Quality Improvement grant, in an amount up to \$558,000, to support our coaching, training and technical assistance work with participating CSPP programs to enhance the quality of care and education they provide to young children for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Childhood Education Focus Area: Quality Early Learning (\$300,401). Funded 100% Contra Costa County Office of Education, California State Preschool Program Quality Improvement Grant.
  - 4.2.2** APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to apply for, and if awarded, accept and appropriate grant funding and execute a grant agreement with Contra Costa County Office of Education for Quality Counts California funding, in an amount up to \$200,000, to support coaching, training, and technical assistance for participating Quality Matters programs to enhance the quality of early care and education for young children, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Childhood Education Focus Area: Quality Early Learning (\$300,401). Funded 100% by Contra Costa County Office of Education, Quality Counts California.



- 4.2.3 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to apply for, and accept a grant award from Regional Asthma Management & Prevention (RAMP) to support indoor air quality improvements and related family education services at First 5 Centers for a three-year term beginning in FY 2026-27. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). No financial exchange.
- 4.2.4 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to apply for, and accept a grant award from UC San Francisco (UCSF) and the Western States Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit to support indoor air quality improvements and related family education services at First 5 Centers for a three-year term beginning in FY 2026-27. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). No financial exchange.
- 4.2.5 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to apply for and accept a grant award from Regional Asthma Management & Prevention to provide in-kind support in the form of air filters and education workshops to families at First 5 Centers, and HVAC assessments and improvements at select First 5 Centers. FY 2026-27 budget line: Strengthening Families Focus Area: First 5 Centers (\$3,919,776). No financial exchange.
- 4.2.6 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or her designee, to execute a contract with First 5 San Benito, in an amount not to exceed \$700,167.49, to provide coaching, training, and technical assistance services to participating Quality Matters programs as part of the IMPACT Legacy and HUB initiatives to improve the quality of early care and education for young children, for the term July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. FY 2026-27 budget line: Early Childhood Education Focus Area: Quality Early Learning. Funded by First 5 California IMPACT Legacy (609,164.84) and HUB funds (\$91,002.65) administered through First 5 San Benito, with Measure X funds as the required local match (\$506,461.00).

4.3 **Accept the Minutes from the Executive Committee Meeting on May 4, 2026.**

4.4 **Accept the Executive Director’s June Report.**

5.0 **CONSIDER for discussion any items removed from the Consent Calendar.** Discussion

6.0 **RECEIVE Presentations from the First 5 Centers’ Community Advisory Councils (CAC) recommendations resulting from their Annual Community Assessment.** Discussion

7.0 **Executive Director’s Report**

8.0 **Communications**

- SB 557 Coalition Letter of support - Child abuse family resource centers
- Letter - Budget Request to Ensure Young Children Retain Access to Preventative Mental Healthcare



**9.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates**

**Discussion**

**10.0 Adjourn**



**Special Commission Meeting Strategic Retreat  
MINUTES**

**Monday, May 18, 2026, 2:30 pm**

**Location: First 5 Contra Costa, Conference Center  
2300 Clayton Road, Suite 300, Concord CA 94520**

**1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair John Jones called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM.

Commissioners present during roll call were:

District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernández [joined remotely at 3:54PM]  
District 1: Alternate Susanna Marshland [arrived at 2:59PM]  
District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey [arrived at 2:47PM]  
District 2: Alternate Vidya Iyengar  
District 3: Mary Helen Rocha  
District 4: Alex Khalfin  
District 4: Alternate Gareth Ashley  
District 5: John Jones, Chair  
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston  
Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli  
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart  
Children & Families Services: Roslyn Gentry

Commissioners not present during roll call were:

District 3: Alternate Bella Merrill  
District 5: Alternate LaTrena Robinson  
Board of Supervisors: Alternate Supervisor Candace Andersen  
Health Department: Alternate Dr. Sefanit Mekuria  
EHSD: Alternate Scott Thompson  
Children & Families Services: Alternate Ana Kaye

**2.0 Public Comment**

No public comment.

**3.0 FY 2027/28 -2031/32 Commission Strategic Plan Discussion.**

The First 5 Contra Costa Commission held a strategic planning retreat focused on two major topics: the organization's updated fiscal projections and reserve policy, and a broader conversation about First 5's future direction as it transitions from a direct funder to a systems builder organization.

***Fiscal Projections and Reserve Policy***

Commissioners received a presentation on updated fiscal projections and a proposed Comprehensive Reserve Policy that would establish three distinct reserves: Contingency, Cash Flow, and Transition, each serving a specific purpose. Discussion centered on the role of the Transition Reserve, which is designed to provide a longer runway for winding down community investments rather than making abrupt cuts. Commissioners explored the timeline for drawing down these reserves and acknowledged that once those funds are spent, the organization will need to operate within its ongoing revenue. Staff



will develop a spending plan and return to the Commission with additional details on spending strategies and opportunities to leverage existing partnerships.

***First 5's Identity Transformation: From Direct Funder to System Builder***

The centerpiece of the retreat was a discussion about First 5 Contra Costa's evolving identity. Commissioners heard about a proposed shift away from primary direct service funder role toward a system-building and policy-focused role. Small groups discussed three questions: what's exciting about this transformation, what questions come up, and how can the Commission actively support the transition.

***What Commissioners Find Exciting***

*System Building as a Real Gap.* Commissioners expressed genuine enthusiasm for the shift. Commissioners noted that system-building work is a real gap that First 5 Contra Costa is well-positioned to fill (and is a gap that few other entities can fill). System-level work is both needed and underutilized in the current early childhood landscape.

*Policy and advocacy potential.* Commissioners were energized by the possibility of First 5 Contra Costa becoming a stronger presence in policy work. There was recognition that one well-placed piece of legislation can have a broader impact than years of direct funding, and that the organization's brand and relationships give it credibility to play this role.

*A chance to reset.* Several Commissioners described the transformation as an opportunity to reset, not just organizationally, but in how the county approaches early childhood systems. There was appreciation for the precision and intentionality of the new vision.

***Questions, Areas of Curiosity, and How the Commission Can Help***

Commissioners raised a range of questions, reflecting both genuine curiosity and practical questions about implementation. Commissioners also offered concrete ideas for supporting the transition. The commission retreat concluded with general support from the Commission to continue planning efforts to define strategic goals and priorities for First 5's system builder identity. Staff will continue internal planning to develop recommendations that will be brought to the Commission for consideration starting early fall.

**4.0 Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

The First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities planning to participate in Commission meetings who contact the Commission's offices, at least 48 hours before the meeting, at (925) 655-0360. Any disclosable public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission to a majority of members of the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission less than 96 hours prior to that meeting are available for public inspection at 2300 Clayton Road, Concord, CA 94520 during normal business hours. In consideration of those who may suffer from chemical sensitivities or who may have allergic reactions to heavy scents, First 5 Contra Costa requests that staff and visitors refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, or the use of strongly scented products in the workplace. We thank you for your consideration of others.



## Commission Meeting

### MINUTES

Monday, May 18, 2026, 6:00 pm

Location: First 5 Contra Costa, Conference Center  
2300 Clayton Road, Suite 300, Concord CA 94520

#### 1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair John Jones called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

##### Commissioners present during roll call were:

District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernández [Remote]  
District 1: Alternate Susanna Marshland  
District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey  
District 2: Alternate Vidya Iyengar  
District 3: Mary Helen Rocha  
District 4: Alex Khalfin  
District 4: Alternate Gareth Ashley  
District 5: John Jones, Chair  
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston  
Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli  
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart  
Children & Families Services: Roslyn Gentry

##### Commissioners not present during roll call were:

District 3: Alternate Bella Merrill  
District 5: Alternate LaTrena Robinson  
Board of Supervisors: Alternate Supervisor Candace Andersen  
Health Department: Alternate Dr. Sefanit Mekuria  
EHSD: Alternate Scott Thompson  
Children & Families Services: Alternate Ana Kaye

#### 2.0 Public Comment

No public comment.

#### 3.0 Approve the Minutes from the March 16, 2026 Commission Meeting.

The Chair asked if there were any questions regarding item 3.0.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes from March 16, 2026. Commissioner Dr. Marla Stuart made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Alex Khalfin.

##### Roll call of vote:

**YES:**  
District 1: Alternate Susanna Marshland  
District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey  
District 3: Mary Helen Rocha  
District 4: Alex Khalfin



District 5: John Jones  
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston  
Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli  
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart  
Children & Families Services: Roslyn Gentry

**NOs:** None

**ABSTAIN:** None

**Absent:** None

The motion was **APPROVED**.

**4.0 Approval of Consent Calendar.** *A Commissioner or member of the public may ask that any of the following consent items be removed from the consent calendar for consideration under item 5.0.*

Dr. Ruth Fernández requested items 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 be removed from consent by Chair Jones to be voted under item 5.0 after Commissioners from the Health Department and Board of Supervisors read recusal statements due to a conflict of interest. The Chair asked if there were any questions regarding all of the other items. There were no questions.

The Chair then called for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar with the exception of item items 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.

Chair Jones called for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Commissioner Marilyn Lucey motioned to accept the Consent Calendar and Commissioner Mary Rocha seconded.

Roll call of vote:

**YES:** District 1: Alternate Susanna Marshland  
District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey  
District 3: Mary Helen Rocha  
District 4: Alex Khalfin  
District 5: John Jones  
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston  
Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli  
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart  
Children & Families Services: Roslyn Gentry

**NOs:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** None

The motion was **APPROVED**.

**5.0 CONSIDER for discussion any items removed from the Consent Calendar.**

Commissioners from Health Services and the Board of Supervisors were required to recuse themselves as noted in each vote below.

Commissioner Jones then called for a motion to approve items 4.2.3 and 4.2.4. Commissioner Khalfin



made a motion to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Gentry.

Roll call of vote:

**YES:** District 1: Alternate Susanna Marshland  
District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey  
District 3: Mary Helen Rocha  
District 4: Alex Khalfin  
District 5: John Jones  
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston (stayed in the room)  
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart  
Children & Families Services: Roslyn Gentry

**RECUSED:** Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli (left the room)

**NOs:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** None  
The motion was **APPROVED**.

**6.0 CONSIDER approving the proposed First 5 Contra Costa Budget for Fiscal Year 2026–27**

Presentation by Kelly Sessions, Finance and Operations Director.

Kelly Sessions presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2026–27 budget and provided an overview of projected revenues, expenditures, and funding assumptions. He reviewed anticipated reductions in Proposition 10 and Proposition 56 revenues, continued support from state and philanthropic grants, and the Commission's strategy to align expenditures with available resources. The proposed budget reflects ongoing implementation of the 5-year Sustainability Plan goals and the newly adopted Comprehensive Reserve Policy.

Commissioners discussed the proposed budget, including long-term revenue projections, reserve levels, workforce development investments, and strategies to ensure program sustainability.

The Chair called for a motion to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2026–27 budget. Commissioner Scales-Preston made a motion to approve the item, seconded by Commissioner Marshland.

Roll call of vote:

**YES:** District 1: Alternate Susanna Marshland  
District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey  
District 3: Mary Helen Rocha  
District 4: Alex Khalfin  
District 5: John Jones  
Board of Supervisors: Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston  
Health Department: Dr. Ori Tzvieli  
EHSD: Dr. Marla Stuart  
Children & Families Services: Roslyn Gentry

**NOs:** None



**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** None

The motion was **APPROVED**.

## **7.0 Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Dr. Ruth Fernández shared highlights from her participation in the Early Childhood Funders Conference in Washington, D.C., where she met with national partners and policymakers to discuss opportunities and challenges impacting early childhood systems.

She reported on the P-3 cross-sector planning effort led by the Contra Costa Regional Health Foundation (CCRHF), with grant support from the Roots and Wings Foundation. The core planning team brings together CCRHF, First 5 Contra Costa leadership, the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation, community-based organizations, lived experience representatives, and subject matter experts. This initiative is intentionally aligned with three key impact efforts happening in the county: Contra Costa Together, the Contra Costa County Early Childhood System Map (launched by First 5 Contra Costa), and the Vital Conditions Framework.

At its core, the initiative aims to deepen what's already working by building on shared language, shared power, and shared purpose. The P-3 planning workgroup has held three discovery meetings focused on identifying opportunities and needs in our county that can center young children's wellbeing and optimal development across local efforts; these discovery meetings have included looking at multiple approaches to more effectively support children and families.

Ruth also shared a video recap of the Ready Kids East County Resource Fair and highlighted the event's success in connecting families with resources and services. She also announced upcoming events, including the Coffee & Kids Policy Breakfast scheduled for May 26 and the Parent Advisory Group quarterly meeting on June 13. Commissioner Gareth Ashley provided comments regarding the Parent Advisory Group meeting. Ruth also announced an upcoming Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP) meeting happening on May 21 and invited Commissioners to participate.

## **8.0 Communications**

First 5 Contra Costa submitted a letter of support for Assembly Bill 2441, the Community Supporter Innovation Pilot, authored by Assemblymember Rodriguez. Letter included in the meeting packet.

## **9.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates**

Commissioner Jones shared a reminder about the upcoming elections.

## **10.0 Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM.

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## Executive Committee Meeting

### MINUTES

Monday, May 4, 2026, 5:00pm

2300 Clayton Road, Suite 300, Conference Center, Concord, CA 94520

#### **1.0 Convene and call to order.**

Chair John Jones called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

In attendance: John Jones, Dr. Marla Stuart, Gareth Ashley, Mary Helen Rocha.

Staff present: Executive Director, Dr. Ruth Fernández; Deputy Director, Sandra Naughton; Finance and Operations Director, Kelly Sessions, Operations Manager, Tammy Henry, Executive Assistant, Mikele Nelson.

#### **2.0 Public Comment.**

No public comment.

#### **3.0 Approve the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting on March 2, 2026:**

Mary Rocha motioned to approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings on March 2, 2026, and Dr. Marla Stuart seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

#### **4.0 CONSIDER accepting the report on significant program, financial or contracts matters, and on any personnel matters relating to Commission staff.**

##### **4.1 Receive updates from Deputy Director**

Deputy Director Sandra Naughton provided a recap of the Ready Kids East County Resource Fair held on April 11 at the Marina Community Center in Pittsburg. She reported that approximately 110 families attended the event, more than doubling participation from the previous year, with over 50 community organizations providing resources and information. Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston participated in the event, and staff shared a list of partner organizations involved. Sandra highlighted several new features added this year, including an Early Care and Education Provider Room where families could learn about local child care programs and services. Additional activities included the Rolling Reader program, a First 5 California's Stronger Starts interactive tent, a drumming circle, and a White Pony grocery giveaway. Preliminary survey results indicated that 65 percent of respondents reported increased awareness of available resources, 80 percent planned to access new services, and 50 percent indicated they would change their approaches to reaching African American families. Commissioner Marilyn Lucey also attended the resource fair.

Sandra also provided an update on the landscape analysis of early childhood education workforce supports and announced the upcoming Coffee & Kids Policy Breakfast focused on workforce development, scheduled for May 26 in Pleasant Hill.

##### **4.2 Receive updates from the Finance and Operations Director:**

Finance and Operations Director Kelly Sessions presented the FY 2025–26 Third Quarter Financial Report. He noted that the Commission was approximately 75 percent through the fiscal year and remained on track with projections presented in the second quarter update. The anticipated fund balance drawdown remained at approximately \$3.5 million, although actual

expenditures are expected to be lower than originally projected. Spending continues to remain within budget.

Kelly explained that third quarter revenue figures reflected only 52 percent of budgeted revenue because the Prop 56 backfill payment was received after the close of the quarter on March 31 and therefore was not reflected in the report. He noted that the payment amount was lower than anticipated, representing the first year of notable instability in Prop 56 revenues. Staff will make final adjustments and journal entries prior to presenting the report to the Commission on May 18.

Commissioners discussed the intentional underspending strategy outlined in the Sustainability Plan, the allocation of office relocation costs across multiple budget lines, and the anticipated reduction in overall fund balance drawdown. Kelly clarified that rent costs for the new office space will not begin until June.

Kelly then provided a preview of the proposed FY 2026–27 budget, including projected declines in Proposition 10 and Proposition 56 revenues and continued funding from the IMPACT Legacy Grant and Office of Traffic Safety car seat grant. He reviewed anticipated grant awards, projected interest earnings, and the addition of a new Inclusion line item within the Early Childhood Education focus area. Commissioners discussed potential future workforce development funding opportunities and the importance of exploring shared space opportunities for First 5 Centers. Commissioners also discussed staffing assumptions, vacant positions, and program salary allocations. Kelly noted that the proposed budget does not include funding for vacancies and that staffing discussions will continue during the strategic planning process.

Kelly presented the draft Comprehensive Reserve Policy, which establishes three reserve categories: a contingency reserve equivalent to six months of operating expenses, a cash flow reserve equivalent to approximately 30 days of operating expenses, and a transition reserve to support scaled operations funded by tobacco tax revenues. Dr. Ruth Fernández noted that the policy aligns with recommendations included in the Commission's approved Sustainability Plan. Kelly explained that the proposed reserve targets are informed by Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommendations based on audited FY 2024–25 financial data. The Committee supported bringing the policy forward to the Commission as a consent item.

#### **4.3 Receive updates from the Executive Director**

Executive Director, Dr. Ruth Fernández provided an update on the Strategic Planning process and timeline. She reported that updated fiscal projections indicate a larger budget gap in fiscal years 2027–28 than previously anticipated, requiring a shift beyond incremental reductions toward broader organizational transformation. Staff have completed three management team planning sessions and an all-staff strategic planning session to prepare for the Commission retreat scheduled for May 18.

Ruth explained that the goal of the retreat is to provide Commissioners with updated financial projections, review reserve scenarios, and discuss strategic options for the organization's future direction. She noted that key decisions related to programs, First 5 Centers, and staffing will need to occur sooner than originally anticipated and may be brought forward incrementally during upcoming Commission meetings. Consultant Nicole Young will continue engaging key partners and stakeholders to inform the planning process.

Committee members discussed the importance of developing contingency plans and addressing potential impacts on staff and contractors. Ruth emphasized that decisions regarding specific positions have not been made and will be guided by the Commission's future strategic direction.

**5.0 CONSIDER DISCUSS matters regarding the operation of the Commission.**

**5.1 Annual Certificate of Compliance – Due July 1, 2026**

Mikele Nelson provided a reminder regarding the Annual Certificate of Compliance due to First 5 California by July 1, 2026. The required documentation and Commission actions are on track for completion.

**5.2 Commissioner Term Renewals**

Mikele Nelson and Dr. Ruth Fernández provided updates on upcoming Commissioner term renewals and ongoing coordination regarding appointments and alternate designations in District 1.

**6.0 CONSIDER accepting the report on statewide activities pertaining to children 0-5, including the activities of the First 5 Association of California, First 5 California, and other statewide advocacy groups.**

Dr. Ruth Fernández provided updates on statewide activities, including participation by four staff members in First 5 Association's annual Advocacy Day in Sacramento. She also shared highlights from her Early Childhood Funders Conference in Alexandria, VA where she took meetings with members of Congress and United States Senators during recent advocacy efforts alongside Executive Director of First 5 Santa Clara, Jennifer Cloyd. Ruth noted that Congressman Josh Harder may attend the upcoming Coffee & Kids Policy Breakfast we are hosting on May 26<sup>th</sup>.

Ruth reported that the First 5 California Summit will take place in Anaheim in August and that the entire program team plans to attend. First 5 Contra Costa has submitted presentation proposals related to sustainability planning, the Early Childhood Systems Map, and the federal child care wage boost initiative.

**7.0 REVIEW agenda items for upcoming Commission Meetings.**

The Committee reviewed agenda items for the May 18 Commission meeting, including adoption of the FY 2026–27 budget, and approval of the Annual Certificate of Compliance. Staff noted that the Commission retreat and regular meeting would result in an extended meeting day, and efforts would be made to keep the remaining agenda concise.

**8.0 Communications**

Chair John Jones shared a brief overview of the recent CoCoKids 50th Anniversary Gala and thanked those who attended.

**9.0 Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.**

## Internal Updates

### *Strategic Planning for Our Next Five Years*

Following the Commission's Strategic Planning Retreat on May 18, First 5 Contra Costa staff have been engaged in reflection and planning to shape the organization's direction for the next five years. This work is grounded in a clear recognition of First 5 Contra Costa's evolving role from primary funder to system builder in the local early childhood ecosystem.

In partnership with strategic planning consultant Nicole Young, who will be conducting key informant interviews with close community partners this summer, staff are working to develop recommended strategic goals and priorities, a spending plan for the Commission-approved Transition Reserve, and a thoughtful, scaled approach to First 5 Contra Costa's largest community investments as tobacco tax revenues continue to decline.

Strategic priorities and recommendations will come before the Commission for consideration and discussion this fall, with formal approval of the new five-year strategic plan expected in December 2026.

## Program, Data & Policy Team Updates

*Working in partnership with others, First 5 Contra Costa aims to change systems of services and supports informed by data and using policy advocacy as a strategy in three focus areas—Early Care and Education, Early Intervention, and Strengthening Families—to better meet the needs of young children and their families.*

### Early Intervention

*Our Early Intervention (EI) focus area aims to ensure that families have access to prevention and early intervention supports and services that foster the optimal development of all children.*

### *Help Me Grow Café: Collaboration, Resources, and Provider Wellness*

During May's special edition of the Help Me Grow Networking Café, 14 community service providers gathered to exchange resource information, discuss their services, and learn more about referral processes. A key highlight of the event was a healing circle facilitated by local therapist and licensed social worker Jeanette Lopez-Urbina, which focused on managing the stressors associated with their profession. Attendees expressed significant gratitude for this opportunity, with one individual noting that it provided a much-needed form of self-care.



### *Capacity Building in Pediatrics*

As part of our developmental screening efforts, First 5 Contra Costa has developed a Referral Pathways training intended to equip health service providers with the necessary information to make timely and targeted referrals after concerns are flagged through developmental screening. There has been significant interest in this type of training with four trainings already completed in the last six months and one already scheduled for next month.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 2026

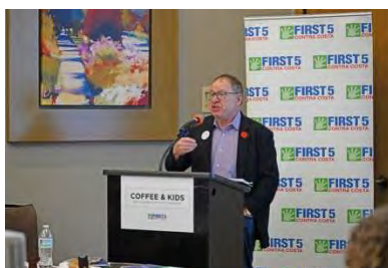


## Early Care and Education

Our *Early Care and Education (ECE)* focus area aims to ensure that all children have access to high-quality, affordable child care and early learning.

### *Coffee & Kids brings leaders together to focus on early care and education workforce*

On May 26, community leaders, advocates, and policymakers gathered for Coffee & Kids, First 5 Contra Costa's Policy Breakfast, for a conversation on the current state of the early care and education workforce, existing ECE workforce supports in our county, and opportunities for investment to support "the workforce behind the workforce." Speakers included Anna Powell from UC Berkeley's Center for the Study of Child Care Employment and consultant Pamm Shaw sharing early findings from a countywide workforce analysis. Congressman Mark DeSaulnier closed the event with remarks emphasizing appreciation for local collaboration and the importance of continued investment in early care and education. [Click here read the full event recap.](#)



## Strengthening Families

Our *Strengthening Families (SF)* focus area helps families build healthy relationships, strengthen support systems, and nurture their children's development.

### *Community Advisory Council's Spring Celebration*

On May 30, First 5 Contra Costa hosted its annual Community Advisory Council (CAC) Spring Celebration, bringing together parent and caregiver leaders from each Center. Throughout the year, CAC members identify family strengths and needs and provide recommendations that help inform Center programs and services. The CACs play an important role in fostering parent leadership and help the Centers remain responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. First 5 Contra Costa extends its appreciation to all CAC members and Center staff for their dedication and contributions throughout the year.



### *Coming Up Next: Continuing to Support Diverse Children and Families.*

On June 23, First 5 Center staff will attend the final session of a professional development series on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, & Expression (SOGIE) facilitated by the [Rainbow Community Center](#). This training was requested by staff to be added as a part of the FY2526 Professional Development Academy offerings supported by First 5 Contra Costa. The sessions are designed to help participants understand the difference between sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation; how these concepts apply to young children and families; and best practices when working with LGBTQIA+ children and families.

## Data & Policy

### *Expanding Access: Systems Map Now Available in Spanish*

The [Spanish-language version of the Contra Costa Early Childhood Systems Map](#) is now available on the First 5 Contra Costa website, expanding access to this resource for Spanish-speaking communities.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 2026



Providing information in multiple languages helps strengthen collaboration and supports more inclusive efforts to improve systems and outcomes for young children and families throughout Contra Costa County. While the Systems Map is now available in Spanish, some related documents are still being translated and are currently available only in English. Spanish versions will be added soon. In the meantime, YouTube videos can be viewed with Spanish subtitles through YouTube's caption settings.

## Parent Advisory Group

The **Parent Advisory Group (PAG)** is a new effort to intentionally center parent voices in First 5 Contra Costa's efforts, and to support parents as early childhood advocates.

### **Closing with Reflection and Celebration: Parent Advisory Group Wraps Up Fiscal Year**

The final Parent Advisory Group meeting of Fiscal Year 2025–26 was held on Saturday, June 13. This wrap-up meeting provided an opportunity for members to review progress and receive updates on key topics discussed throughout the year, including developmental screening and advocacy efforts. The meeting concluded with a celebration of PAG members and recognition of their valuable contributions, engagement, and commitment to supporting children and families in Contra Costa County.



## Family Economic Security Partnership

The **Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP)** is a public, private, and nonprofit collaboration dedicated to increasing the income and building the assets of low-income families and individuals living in Contra Costa County.

### **FESP Highlights Budget Impacts on Families and Safety Net Services**

In May, FESP hosted an informative session on the potential impacts of the Governor's proposed budget on families and the local county tax measure to backfill federal cuts to safety net services. Participants heard from Laura Pryor of the California Budget & Policy Center, who provided an overview of the state budget process and discussed what the Governor's May Revision could mean for low-income families with children in Contra Costa County. The meeting also included information about Measure B from local partners and the Multi-Faith Action Coalition, as well as resources to help community members better understand and connect with their elected representatives. A recording of the meeting and related resources are available on the [FESP Quarterly Meetings page](#) on the First 5 Contra Costa website.

## State Updates

### **First 5 Contra Costa Staff Complete Statewide First 5 Leadership Lab**

We're proud to share that our four team members, Deputy Director; Data and Policy Manager; and two Early Childhood Program Officers have successfully completed the inaugural statewide 5 Network Leadership Lab!

This first cohort was designed to foster mutual growth, connection, and shared leadership across the First 5 Network, and by all accounts, it delivered. Staff gained meaningful new relationships with colleagues from First 5 commissions across California discovering both the common ground that unites their work and the diverse approaches to early childhood initiatives that make each commission unique.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 2026



Staff reflected on the value of connecting with peers who truly understand the distinct challenges and responsibilities that come with working in the First 5 world. At a recent meeting, staff who participated reported their insights about this experience including the joys, the complexity, and the purpose behind the work First 5s do, which created a sense of camaraderie and belonging for them. They reported looking forward to continuing to deepen these newly formed relationships in their distinct roles and ongoing work.

We remain committed to championing staff development and capacity building, and we're grateful to the statewide First 5 Network for creating this forward-thinking opportunity. Congratulations to our team on this milestone and thank you for bringing what you've learned back to work we do together for Contra Costa's youngest children and families.

## ***First 5 Network Resilience Initiative Update – phase 1 RFA***

Last January 2025, First 5 California approved \$3 million for the First 5 Network Resilience Initiative, a two-phased effort to strengthen capacity and sustainability across the statewide First 5 Network. The initiative brings together First 5 California, the First 5 Association, and all 58 county commissions to explore system-level improvements, share strategies, and develop actionable approaches to sustaining services for children prenatal to age 5, particularly as Proposition 10 revenues continue to decline.

On May 7, 2026, First 5 California released a Request for Applications for a statewide Community of Practice, offering a single \$450,000 grant over three years (FY26/27–FY28/29). First 5 Butte County stepped forward as the lead fiscal agency, taking on the responsibility of submitting the network's single application ahead of the June 5 deadline and serving as the county commission lead for the initiative going forward. Under this structure, the First 5 Association will serve as subcontractor, bringing its statewide expertise in convening county commissions, facilitating Communities of Practice, and providing technical assistance focused on sustainability and systems-building. If awarded, the grant would launch July 1, 2026. First 5 Contra Costa will have the opportunity to participate in this initiative, and we will keep the Commission informed as it moves forward.



26 May 2026

The Honorable Alex Lee  
 Chair  
 Assembly Human Services Committee  
 1021 O Street, Suite 6330  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 557 - SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Lee and Human Services Committee:

We the undersigned members the California Family Resource Association (CFRA) are writing to urge your support for of SB 557.

Earlier this year, SB 557 passed unanimously out of the Senate Human Services Committee and full Senate. The bill updates California's statutory definition of Family Resource Centers (FRCs), as initially laid out in SB 436 (Hurtado, 2019), to align with new federal legislation. Shortly after its passage in 2019, the CDSS Office of Child Abuse Prevention and

the Child Abuse Prevention Center were able to leverage SB 436 to channel \$13 million in state COVID Relief Funds to bring direct assistance to more than 100,000 families through community-embedded FRCs. SB 557 will position California’s FRCs to bring even greater benefits to California’s communities.

In January 2025, then President Biden signed into law HR 9076, the “Supporting America’s Families and Children Act,” which, following California’s lead, defined FRCs in federal statute for the first time in history. HR 9076 encourages states to partner with FRCs for assisting families, opening the door for future federal funding. With SB 557, California will be able to make the most of these possibilities by updating and strengthening the state definition of FRCs. Specifically, it makes more clear that FRCs:

- are a place-based hub for family supports;
- offer help at no or low cost;
- offer multi-generational services;
- foster peer supports and community connections; and
- reflects and responds to community needs.

As California looks to build a community pathway that will reduce costly child welfare and juvenile justice interventions, and more immediately seeks to mitigate the impact of federal safety net instability, SB 557 will uplift FRCs as vital and robust partners for community well-being.

Sincerely,

Tiffany	McMillon	African American Family & Cultural Center
Ron	Brown, Ph.D.	All For Kids
Adrienne	Shilton	CA Alliance of Child and Family Services
Michael	Williams	The California Family Resource Association
Jessica	Ramirez	Carpinteria Children's Project
Lisa	Fraser	Center for Family Strengthening
Marco	Silva	Centro La Familia Advocacy Services
Margarita	Rocha	Centro La Familia Advocacy Services
Janay	Eustace	The Child Abuse Prevention Center
Janette	Bramlett	Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council of Humboldt
Carol	Carrillo	Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County
Juliet	Terry	Child Care Resource Center
Raymon	Cancino	Community Bridges
Cynthia	Burton	Comprehensive Youth Services of Fresno, Inc.
Cookie	Powell	Dixon Family Services
Josh	Leonard	East Bay Agency for Children
DeeAnna	Granata	East County First 5 Center
Lowell	Ens	Exceptional Parents Unlimited
Judy	Knapp	Exhilaration Station Family Resource Center
Zoila	Perez Sanchez	Family Resource Center Network of Solano County
Yvette	Baptiste	Family Resource Centers Network of California
Janis	Lambert Connallon	Family Voices of California

Dr. Ruth	Fernandez	First 5 Contra Costa
Erin	Maurie	First 5 Sacramento
Esther	Franco	Fresno Council on Child Abuse Prevention
Eleana	Binder	Glide Foundation
Jeff	Farber	Helpline Youth Counseling
Allison	Becwar	Lincoln Families
Angela Louie	Howard	Lotus Bloom Family Resource Center
Amber	Scroggins	Mariposa Family Resource Center
Dennis	Haines	Merced County Office of Education Family Resource Center
Amber	Twitchell	On The Move
Paul	Prado	Parenting Network Inc
Jocelyn	O'Neal	River oak Center for Children
Kula	Koenig	Safe & Sound
Alicia	Perez	Safe Passages
Kari	Cordero	SANE-SART
Kathryn	Icenhower	SHIELDS for Families
Teresa	Crimmens	Sierra Community House
Kathryn	Lago	Solano Family & Children Services
Michele	Blake	Sutter County Children & Families Commission
Wendy	Wendy Wang	Sycamores
Robert	Sanger	The Folsom Cordova Community Partnership
Melissa	Hannah	United Parents
Keristofer	Seryani	United Way of Stanislaus County
Yolanda	Randles	West Fresno Health Care Coalition (dba: West Fresno Family Resource Center)



May 30, 2026

**RE: Budget Request to Ensure Young Children Retain Access to Preventative Mental Healthcare**

Dear Members of the Contra Costa County State Legislative Delegation,

On behalf of First 5 Contra Costa, I write to express our strong support for First 5 Association's request that the legislative Budget Committees take three actions:

1. Increase appropriations for the Population-Based Prevention Fund by \$20 million to offset the loss of infant and early childhood prevention funding at the county level;
2. Clarify statutory eligibility to explicitly designate county First 5s as eligible applicants for CDPH BHSA Population-Based Prevention Funds; and,
3. Establish a set-aside for children ages 0–5 within the CDPH BHSA Population-Based Prevention Fund, ensuring this critical window of development is not overlooked.

At First 5 Contra Costa, we have administered state behavioral health funding for many years. We are deeply concerned that the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) transition will result in less funding for critical services for infants, young children, and their caregivers' mental health supports.

The Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) separated the prevention and early intervention services previously combined under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). Under BHSA, prevention funding moves to the new state-level population-based prevention fund administered by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). This transition threatens to eliminate millions of dollars in prevention and early intervention funding currently supporting infant and early childhood mental health services statewide. Children ages 0–5 are particularly at risk: changes to BHSA priority population definitions mean that early intervention funding for this age group will decrease, making access to prevention funding even more critical.

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funding has supported group-based, community programs rather than individual clinical services. These programs are uniquely effective at reaching families from historically marginalized communities, including immigrant and low-income families of color. At-risk programs in Contra Costa County include:

- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** Pairs mental health consultants with child care providers and other adults who work with infants and young children.



- **Parent coaching and education models** (such as Triple P): Equips parents with strategies to promote social competence and self-regulation in children.
- **Developmental playgroups**: Specialist-led sessions for parents and children that promote development and social interactions for children with developmental concerns.

Additionally, the BHSA transition compounds several other simultaneous funding losses: steep declines in county First 5 commission revenues, which have supplemented prevention and early intervention mental health programming in our county, and the conclusion of California's Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) grants in 2026. Together, these overlapping gaps threaten to dismantle essential mental health infrastructure across the state.

First 5 Contra Costa has braided Prop 10 funding with state mental health funding and local sales tax revenue to serve hundreds of families and caregivers in programs such as Triple P, early childhood mental health consultation, and developmental playgroups. These programs cannot be reimbursed through Medi-Cal, making BHSA funding their only viable source of support. Without continued investment, children and caregivers will lose critical services.

CDPH's final guidance states that prevention funds will be distributed to community-based organizations (CBOs) and tribes through competitive grants, which means local First 5s, as governmental agencies, will not be eligible to apply. First 5s have historically provided these services directly or through partnerships with CBOs. In smaller and rural counties, county First 5s are often the only agencies with the expertise and administrative capacity to respond to state RFPs, manage evaluations, and meet reporting requirements. Excluding First 5s from eligibility risks leaving rural communities without the infrastructure needed to compete for these funds.

**A general fund increase, combined with eligibility clarification and targeted set-aside for ages 0–5, will protect local service infrastructure** and ensure that upstream prevention programs continue to reach California's youngest children and their families. Without action, gaps in funding will cause irreversible damage to the local systems built to serve them.

We respectfully urge your support for these actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth Fernández", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Ruth Fernández Ed.D.  
Executive Director, First 5 Contra Costa