



FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2019

First 5 Alameda County (First 5) is an innovative public entity created by the passage of Proposition 10 in 1998 to fund services for children aged 0-5. First 5 is the local leading policy voice and funder of programs focused solely on young children (ages 0-5). The results we seek to achieve are:

- Children are ready for kindergarten and can later achieve success in the third grade
- Children are free from abuse and neglect

There is growing acknowledgment that if we are to use public resources effectively to achieve these results, we need to support families around jobs, housing, food, financial resources, health care and transportation. First 5 is committed to advocating for and achieving equity to ensure that all children in Alameda County are born healthy and can achieve their full potential.

There are specific policy opportunities at a local, state, and federal level that will help us achieve our desired results. On a federal and state level, First 5 takes positions on legislation and administrative changes that impact early childhood education, and improve the health, well-being, and socioeconomic conditions of families. This includes supporting and informing the First 5 Association policy agenda, inclusive of an equity lens. On a local level, we advocate for the integration and streamlining of the public systems that serve families. We connect the early childhood system to other sectors and support the community organizing and advocacy efforts of families and community based organizations. Below are policy opportunities we will embark on in 2019, with a spotlight on some of the action we will take:



SUSTAINABILITY FOR PROVEN RESULTS

- Preserve, sustain, and scale proven and successful First 5 programs that are easily accessible to families such as Help Me Grow, Quality Counts, and family engagement and support programs.
- Align outcomes and indicators with those of other systems partners and facilitate cross-sector data sharing so we can measure impact over time and make the case for sustainability.
- Gain consensus on how to measure school readiness in Alameda County and in California.

SPOTLIGHT ON ACTION FOR 2019:

- Produced a 20th anniversary report highlighting the good work we have done, and the path forward with an emphasis on using data and research for action and policy change.
- Facilitate a process with County leaders to integrate Help Me Grow (HMG) into the current systems of care to ensure this important safety net continues to serve families.
- Create and share data profiles of each Alameda County Supervisory District.
- Convene county partners and seeking philanthropic investment to support, expand, evolve, and integrate the early childhood system of care for existing parent and community serving programs (e.g. Help Me Grow, QRIS, DULCE) to ensure the safety net serves all families.
- Create data profiles of each Alameda County Supervisory District.
- Use the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to inform policy and advocacy efforts.



ADDRESS INEQUITY AND CHILD POVERTY

- Increase access to quality early care and education (ECE). This includes promoting the diversity of the ECE workforce, and improving conditions and compensation for ECE professionals.
- Defend the safety of families by improving access to affordable housing and ensuring neighborhoods are free from community violence. This includes opposing immigration changes designed to cause fear and isolation in the communities we serve.
- Advocate for programs that acknowledge the strain low-income/working families are under and guarantee families have a right to basic needs regardless of their ability to pay (eg. Diaper Banks).
- Advocate for policy and practice change that ensures better access, customer service, and utilization of the social safety net. This includes simplifying the eligibility, enrollment, and renewal process.
- Increase income and assets for families (eg: Earned Income Tax Credit and college savings accounts).
- Support investments in community economic development projects benefiting children and families.
- Promote policies that seek to achieve equity for all young children in the early childhood system.
- Advocate for increased access to health, behavioral health, and dental care services.



SUPPORT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

- Train and support parent leaders by initiating the creation of an Alameda County parent leadership development and implementation structure.
- Advocate for the expansion and sustainability of parent support programs (eg: Paid Family Leave).
- Advocate for increased funding and resources for programs outside the traditional early care and education setting that help prepare children for kindergarten.
- Promote the adoption of the Father Friendly Principles and advocate for father-specific services.
- Advocate for increased funding and resources for programs outside the traditional early care and education setting that help prepare children for kindergarten.
- Create livable communities by supporting improvements to the built environment and public infrastructure (e.g., parks, playgrounds, community housing developments, and transportation).
- Support policies that reduce exposure to environmental toxins among young children.

SPOTLIGHT ON ACTION FOR 2019:

- Lead the Alameda County Early Learning Communities Network enabling cities and areas in Alameda County to build early learning action plans.
- Support efforts to adopt the Father Friendly Principles statewide.
- Advocate for policies that support family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care.
- Partner with First 5 Neighborhoods Ready for School grantees to create policy agendas.
- Engage community experts to define investment priorities and program design.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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