



FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2020

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 2020 with a spotlight on some of the action we will take:



SUSTAINABILITY FOR PROVEN RESULTS

- Preserve, sustain, and scale proven and successful programs that are easily accessible to families and promote child development and family wellbeing, such as Help Me Grow, Quality Counts, and family engagement and support programs.
- Coordinate and align neighborhood and countywide family centered programs and investments 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.
- Measure school readiness in Alameda County to better understand and advocate for the family, community, and policy factors that lead to children being ready for school, and schools being ready for all children. This includes working with early childhood systems leaders and schools to gain consensus on how best to measure school readiness in the county and the state.
- Work in partnership with other systems leaders to capture state and federal funding (such as MediCal) to scale, sustain, and improve access to, services for children 0-5.

SPOTLIGHT ON ACTION FOR 2020:

- Support efforts to pilot programs that can serve as proof of concept for an integrated early childhood service delivery system that mitigates childhood adversity and builds resiliency among families. The result will provide systems change recommendations to statewide and national efforts to identify and address childhood adversity through the early childhood system of care.
- Continue to convene county partners to 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.
- Partner with the Alameda County Office of Education to convene a countywide conversation on Kindergarten readiness assessment tools, using research to inform policy and advocacy efforts.
- Lead efforts in partnership with Alameda County to ensure families with children ages 0-5 complete the Census.



ADDRESS INEQUITY AND CHILD POVERTY

- Increase access to quality early care and education (ECE). We are committed to increasing public investment in quality early care and education for children birth to five. This includes expanding access, promoting quality standards, improving the diversity of the ECE workforce, and improving conditions and compensation for ECE professionals, and ensuring countywide efforts are informing, and informed by, statewide policy changes.
- Serve, advocate for, and defend the rights and safety of all families regardless of their race, socio-economic, immigration or housing status.
- Protect and prioritization of pregnant people and families experiencing homelessness.
- Prioritize families with young children in equitable community investments.
- 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).
- Support policy and practice changes 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).
- Advocate for increased access to health, behavioral health, and dental care services.

SPOTLIGHT ON ACTION FOR 2020

- Ensure budget and policy proposals to expand quality early care and education at a county and statewide level succeed, in partnership with First 5 Association and other systems leaders.
- Partner with county organizations and agencies to end unsheltered family homelessness by 2021 and provide facilities funding to make shelter spaces more family friendly.

- Continue to work with partners to further the work of the CARE program to help unhoused families find subsidized child care and other concrete supports and begin to make recommendations on this program can be replicated at a county or statewide level.
- Continue to oppose immigration policy changes that hurt families and ensure families are well informed about changes.



SUPPORT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

- Train and support parent leaders
- Advocate for the expansion and sustainability of parent support programs (eg: Paid Family Leave).
- Provide capacity building for providers to:
- Promote the adoption of the Father Friendly Principles and advocate for father-specific services.
- Support parent leadership and advocacy.
- Create livable communities by supporting community driven improvements to the built environment and public infrastructure (e.g., parks, playgrounds, community housing developments, and transportation).

SPOTLIGHT ON ACTION FOR 2020:

- Lead the Alameda County Early Learning Communities Network and provide grants to cities to adopt early childhood programming, services, and policies that put families first.
- 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

Page Tomblin, *Senior Administrator for Policy*

510-227-6982 or page.tomblin@first5alameda.org