

## FIRST 5 PRIORITY: QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

*The moment babies come into this world, their brains are forming connections that will determine how they learn, think, and grow. In fact, 90% of their brains are developed by age 5.*

*That's why it's so important to invest in quality early learning programs from day one. The first 1,000 days are critical!*



### FIRST 5 CALL TO ACTION

## WHAT Is Quality Early Learning?

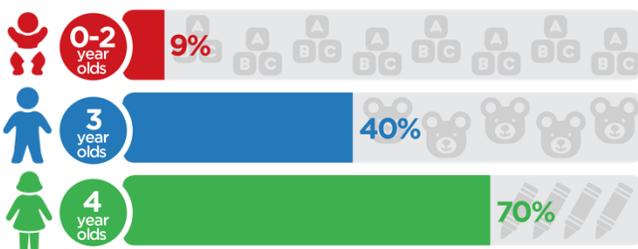
A safe, supportive child care environment that supports children's social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development, including:

- 🌱 Highly skilled adults that engage children in warm, responsive interactions
- 🌱 High-quality teacher preparation and ongoing professional supports
- 🌱 Small class sizes and adult-to-child ratios
- 🌱 Developmentally and culturally appropriate standards, practices, and environment
- 🌱 Developmental screening and child observation
- 🌱 Families engaged in their children's learning

## WHY Quality Early Learning Matters

Children's early learning experiences have life-long effects on their potential to succeed. Research shows children who enter kindergarten ready to succeed are 10 times more likely to meet 3<sup>rd</sup> grade state standards.

Unfortunately, California is failing to meet the early learning needs of all its children. Current investments in access, per-child funding, quality improvement, and workforce development are insufficient to provide quality early learning opportunities for all eligible children.



Eligible infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with access to publicly-funded early learning programs.

**Increase the state's budget investment in per-child funding rates:** Raise the per child rate for all state-funded programs to reflect the market cost of high-quality early learning and compensation for a qualified workforce.

**Increase the state's budget investment in quality early learning and care spaces for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers:** Improve access by providing increased, stable funding for new slots and expanded family eligibility.

**Protect and expand existing high-quality standards for all state-funded early learning programs tied to the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** Preserve quality standards for developmentally appropriate curriculum, ratios, teacher qualifications, and care environment; expand family engagement and education systems; and expand professional learning and quality improvement investments.

**Increase state funding for an integrated statewide QRIS:** Protect and expand existing state budget investments to promote providers' and families' access to and participation in an integrated statewide QRIS that prioritizes resources for professional supports and coaching.

## Improving Access to Quality Early Learning Programs in Riverside County

*Ensuring our youngest children enter school ready to learn and embrace lifelong learning*

### Who We Serve

First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission, supports early childhood development through educational outreach, partnerships, and funding for early learning, child health and family strengthening services that benefit Riverside County children, prenatal through age 5.

### Program Strategies

#### QUALITY START – RIVERSIDE COUNTY:

The goal of this initiative is to help children thrive by increasing the number of high-quality early learning settings, including supporting and engaging families in the early learning process through a countywide quality rating and improvement system (QRIS).

#### FAMILY STRENGTHENING:

*Strengthening Families™* is a research informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. This strategy will be incorporated in all of First 5 Riverside program strategies. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors:

1. Parental resilience
2. Social connections
3. Knowledge of parenting and child development
4. Concrete support in times of need
5. Social and emotional competence of children

#### QUALITY EARLY LEARNING FUNDING:

Riverside County will receive an estimated \$34.7 million in new funding for early learning over the next five years. This includes local and state First 5 Prop 10 funding, along with leveraged funding from the following sources: QRIS Block Grant, Infant/Toddler Block Grant and AB212.



## SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 3 HIGHLIGHTS

### CHILDREN

There are approximately 34,481 children between the ages of 0-5, this is about 20.3% of children 0-5, in the County.<sup>1</sup>

### EARLY LEARNING

The number of licensed spaces in Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes for children between the ages of 0-5 located in Supervisorial District 3 is 9,125. Approximately 25,536 additional licensed spaces are needed to adequately meet the demand.<sup>2</sup>

### LOCAL EARLY LEARNING GRANTEE WORK

This past fiscal year, more than 240 children were served through First 5's *Access & Quality* initiative, which helped set the foundation for *quality* early learning in Riverside County. Another 25 children were served through special needs contracts.

*"We are in the process of adopting two little girls who have severe emotional issues. Being in a great preschool program has really helped them grow leaps and bounds! Not only have they learned from an education standpoint, they have grown by learning how to build healthy relationships and social skills. Without First 5, my girls would not have been able to attend such a high quality program."* (Parent)

**31** SITES RECRUITED FOR NEW QUALITY START INITIATIVE IN SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 3