



Being the Best Parent Possible

Make the First Five Years Count Special to California Kids

From the moment they are born children grow and learn at an extraordinary pace. This makes the first five years of life some of the most important because they are the foundation for all years that follow.

The first five years are when the most dramatic development in a child's brain occurs. It is the time when bonding with parents and caregivers is critical to a child's health and development because children thrive when they feel secure and their needs are met. Every time you talk, hold, read, play and listen to your child, you are helping his or her brain grow. These early positive experiences make a lifelong positive impact on your child.

In 1998, California voters approved Prop 10, The California Children and Families Act, which added a 50 cent tax on tobacco products to fund programs for children from the prenatal stage through age five. Prop 10 generates hundreds of millions of dollars every year to benefit California's youngest children. To administer and invest these funds locally each county is required to create a First 5 Children and Families Commission. The county commissions ensure that the tobacco tax funds are meeting the needs of the community. Funding for each commission is based on each county's birth rate.

For a decade, First 5 Sacramento has allocated millions of dollars to local organizations to provide programs and services that help local children. Programs and services focus on making sure children:

- Grow up healthy with regular pediatrician visits and up-to-date immunizations.

- Receive high quality childcare, preschool and early learning opportunities, so children enter kindergarten confident and ready to learn.

- Get a nutritious start with breastfeeding and healthy eating habits.
- Live in loving nurturing supportive families.
- Grow up in strong safe communities that value young children.

First 5 Sacramento is working to make sure parents and caregivers get the information and support they need. Programs are available to:

- Help parents bond and form healthy attachments with their children.
- Learn more about child development.
- Learn ways to be a child's first and most important teacher.
- Provide support for life's challenges and connect parents to other parents in their community.
- Connect parents to the services they need.

Working together with community partners, First 5 Sacramento has made a difference for Sacramento County's children for a decade. By devoting resources for children during their first five years, the need for other services later in life such as special education, foster care, or treatment for addiction and mental health are lessened. And in return children are healthier, do better in school and are better prepared for life right from the start.

For additional information about First 5 Sacramento call 876-5865 and visit the online Parents Resource Center at www.First5Sacramento.net for tips and resources.



Connect with First 5 Sacramento programs in Sacramento County*

- Local Resources for All Parents
- Cover the Kids, 1-866-850-4321; www.coverthekids.com: No-to-low cost children's health insurance.
- Women Infants Children Program (WIC), 876-5000: Breastfeeding support services.
- Child Action, Inc., 369-0191; www.childaction.org: Childcare referral services and quality childcare training for providers.
- Parenting Support Services, 874-2796; www.birth-beyond.com: There are eight family resource centers throughout Sacramento County that offer services such as parenting workshops, family needs assessments and at-home visits.
- 2-1-1: Dial 211 for information about community programs and services for your family.
- 24-Hour Parent Support Line: 1-888-281-3000.
- Crisis Nursery, 1-877-KIDS PLACE; www.crisisnurseryonline.com: Day-time/24 hour respite care for children with parents dealing with a crisis

Early care/preschool: It is never too early to contact your school district for information on programs and educational resources available in your area.

Community Grants, 876-5865; www.First5Sacramento.net: Grants for groups of at least three community members to focus on building relationships and connecting with other parents that have young children.

Oral Health: Fluoridated water is the number one approach to combating children's dental disease. Check the fluoridation map at www.First5Sacramento.net to find out if you have fluoridated water then consult with your child's dentist.

The Kit for New Parents. Babies don't come with instruction manuals, which is why First 5 Sacramento's free Kit for New Parents is available to provide parenting information and tools. This free resource, a \$100 value, includes instructional DVDs, guide books and informational brochures with parenting information, advice, local resources and useful tips to help first-time parents prepare for the joys and challenges that lie ahead. To get your own Kit, download an order form at www.First5Sacramento.net

* Each county has a First 5 Children and Families Commission providing unique local services for that county. Surrounding First 5's include: First 5 Yolo: 530-669-2475; First 5 Placer: 530-745-1304; First 5 El Dorado: 530-672-8298.

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