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**First 5 LA Invests In Key Early Care and Education Policy and Advocacy Partnerships**

*Five-Year, \$15 Million Investment Will Strengthen Existing Policy and Advocacy Efforts to Expand and Improve Early Learning Opportunities for L.A. County’s Children*

**LOS ANGELES** – Expanding its leadership in advocacy efforts for young children, First 5 LA today announced the launch of its five-year, \$15 million Early Care and Education Policy and Advocacy Fund (PAF). The fund was created to strengthen existing advocacy efforts and help create new opportunities for collaboration among groups and organizations seeking policy and systems change with a goal of improving access to quality early care and education in Los Angeles County.

“The challenges parents face accessing quality early care and education is greater than any one organization alone can address,” said Kim Belshé, Executive Director of First 5 LA. “The First 5 LA Policy and Advocacy Fund is representative of our strategic shift focusing on changing policies and systems. We are leading with partnership to address these challenges. Our goal is to make a greater impact for all of L.A. County’s 650,000 young children and their families.”

A recently released [assessment](#) underscores the urgency of addressing this issue. L.A. County parents may pay nearly half their income in early care and education costs and many struggle with a shortage of infant and toddler care. In fact, licensed centers and family care homes in L.A. County only have the capacity to serve 13 percent of working parents with infants and toddlers, according to the assessment.

“Los Angeles is ground zero for both the achievement gap and the opportunity gap. Together with this diverse group of grantees – from the early learning and child care, civil rights and business sectors – we can build the policies and platform to ensure that LA’s kids get a fair shot at success,” said Kim Pattillo Brownson, Vice President of Policy & Strategy at First 5 LA.

Initial grantees from the fund are [Advancement Project California](#), a partnership of [the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles](#) and its two largest members, [Crystal Stairs](#) and the [Child Care Resource Center, Children Now, Early Edge, LAUP](#) and [Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#).

This investment will help expand grantees’ overall capacity to engage in long-term policy and advocacy work, including policy analysis and educating policy makers on the need to address persistent gaps in quality and access to subsidized care, and professionalizing the early education workforce.

“This investment is focused on building consistent boots-on-the-ground advocacy to achieve long-lasting systems change that benefits LA’s children,” continued Pattillo Brownson.

First 5 LA has selected Community Partners as an intermediary, to further support the focus on outcomes, capacity building at the organizational and field level, and partnership. First 5 LA is working with Community Partners to support and coordinate this fund. They will help organizations identify ways to align and complement policy agendas, share information and seize emerging opportunities.

**(MORE)**

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“This Fund has the potential to be a catalyst that will strengthen and unify our advocacy efforts on behalf of working parents and their children,” said Cristina Alvarado, Executive Director at Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles. “First 5 LA’s contribution exemplifies the spirit of collaboration and commitment to advance our common mission to strengthen families and continue to raise the quality and access of child care and early learning programs across Los Angeles.”

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