

Urgent action needed to prevent cuts to First 5 funding

First 5 was established by Proposition 10 in 1998 as a tax on tobacco with the funds going to programs for children 0-5 and their families. It has been on the ballot 3 times—each time California voters have voted to keep these funds set aside for children. The funds go to each county where independent local commissions decide how they will best be used to meet the needs of children in their county.

First 5 funds are once again threatened by the California budget crisis. The Governor is proposing to divert millions of dollars of First 5 funds into the general fund to fill budget gaps. Throughout California last year more than 270,000 children received First 5 funded early education and child development services and more than 500,000 received health related services.

What does this mean for EPU?

First 5 funds half of EPU's annual budget. All of EPU's programs would be impacted by loss of these funds. EPU provides direct services to 1,000 children and families every month. First 5 dollars cut across all of EPU's early intervention, developmental play groups, assessment, parenting, and family support programs.

Please write to your legislators and ask them to preserve First 5 funding and prevent First 5 from going back on the June ballot for the fourth time.

Without your help, children and families with special needs, along with at risk families seeking parenting education throughout California will be left without the help they require.

Below is a list of Senate and Assembly Subcommittee members who will be deciding the fate of California's children in early February. Please use the templates on the link to let your voice be heard. Tell them to protect First 5!

For more information call EPU at 559/229-2000.